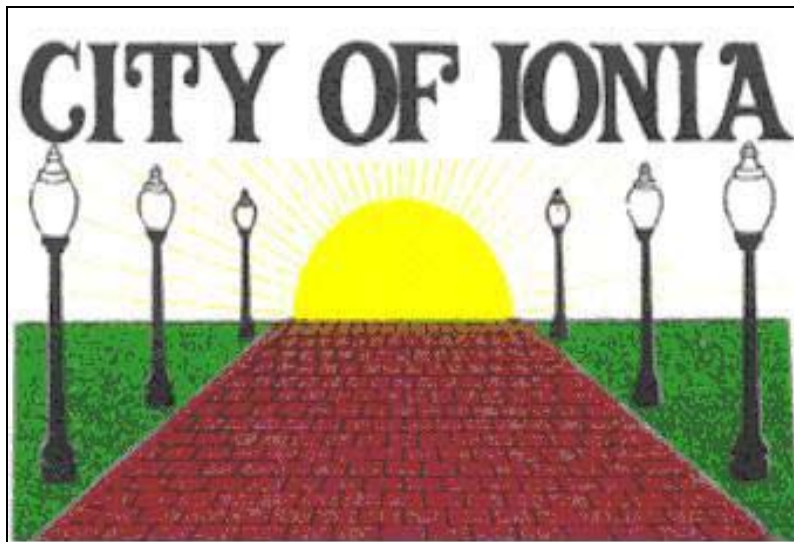


MASTER PLAN



2001

PRIORITY ACTIONS

The 2001 City of Ionia Master Plan is a blend of practical solutions to resolve current concerns and problems and a long range vision to maintain the small town atmosphere of a growing city. The Master Plan contains many recommendations. The most important ones are set forth here at the beginning of this document to emphasize their importance. The Ionia Planning Commission strongly urges that these recommendations be acted upon as soon as possible in order to chart a positive course for the City of Ionia in the new millennium.

1. Create a new City staff position of Om budsman/Neighborhood Organizer who will coordinate the concerns and issues of neighborhood associations with appropriate City departments or procedures and who would also be responsible for carrying out many of the strategic action plan recommendations.
2. Create a committee of representatives from local industry, truck drivers, public safety officials, the City Council, MDOT and representatives from neighborhood associations to identify new truck routes through the City.
3. Revise the City Zoning Map and text to implement the changes recommended by Chapter 4 of the Master Plan.
4. Initiate efforts to work with Ionia Township to annex those Ionia Township areas surrounded by the City in order to square up the City boundaries.
5. Establish an M-66 / Dexter Street Corridor Business Association that would work to establish common goals for the improvement of the appearance and function of this corridor which serves as the gateway to the community of Ionia.
6. Work with and support initiatives by the Michigan Department of Transportation to improve the design of the intersections of M-66 with M-21 to facilitate the safe movement of traffic and pedestrians.
7. The City Manager and Chairperson of the Planning Commission should meet in January and July of each year to prepare a schedule to carry out the recommendations of the Master Plan and to monitor the progress of the implementation measures in the Plan.

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CITY OF IONIA
IONIA CITY COUNCIL

Dan Balice, Mayor

First Ward

*Gordon Kelley
Monica Miller*

Second Ward

*Kim Patrick
Wayne Piercefield, Jr. Kevin Miller*

Third Ward

*William Bushong
Bob O'Mara*

Fourth Ward

*Tom Chadwick
Bob O'Mara*

IONIA PLANNING COMMISSION

*Scott Anderson, Chair
Gordon Kelley
George Brown
Bernice Falsetta*

*Rita Perry
Michelle Reeves
Art Mutrynowski
Bruce Roetman*

CITY OF IONIA STAFF

Tom Wieczorek, City Manager

Dave Cook, City Clerk

Larry Harvey, Zoning Administrator

Roger Frazee, Dept. of Public Safety

Julianne Burns, Dept. of Grants

Gary Cunningham, Dept. of Public Works

Chris Kenyon, Dept. of Public Utilities

Shawn Dibbel, Dept. of Recreation

Lynn Lafler, Dept. of Transportation

Cathy Pearce, Dept. of Finance

Susan Lehman, Asst. to City Manager

John McNamara, City Attorney

MASTER PLAN ADOPTED

April 30, 2001

***Prepared with the assistance of:
MainStreet Planning Company
Grand Rapids, Michigan***

***Maps by:
Capital Consultants
Lansing, Michigan***

***Drawings by:
Design Plus
Grand Rapids, Michigan***

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Master Plan is to allow the City of Ionia to set forth in a comprehensive manner the strategies for its physical development. The Municipal Planning Act, Public Act 285 of 1931 as amended, specifically gives municipal planning commissions the authority to prepare and officially adopt a Master Plan. This Plan will serve as an advisory guide to maintain the existing areas, and for the development or redevelopment of other areas into a desirable living and working environment for present and future City residents.

Planning, in simple terms, is both a goal oriented and continuous process which seeks to constantly improve a community and create a better environment. A Master Plan is a tool by which this goal can be reached. It is used by both private individuals and public officials to make decisions concerning the long-range future of a community.

The City of Ionia Planning Commission and City Council last prepared a Master Plan in 1975. A great deal of development and change has occurred in the City since that time necessitating the need for a comprehensive look at the future of the City of Ionia. Issues that prompted this update include: the inevitable growth adjacent to City boundaries as commercial, industrial and residential use continue to increase both within and beyond City boundaries; requests for water and sewer services from development outside City limits; the need to examine and revise portions of the Zoning Ordinance which is the legally defensible document that manages land use in the City; a desire to retain and improve upon the positive small town attributes that make Ionia a desirable place to live.

The Master Plan update approach is much different than the Plan prepared in 1975. The major emphasis in this update is on developing strategies and steps to carry out these strategies. The key elements of this planning effort are to:

1. Establish new initiatives for the future development of the City based upon the outcomes of a community-wide visioning process, neighborhood workshops, meetings with downtown merchants, local industry, the historical commission, and other special interest groups.
2. Revise the City of Ionia Zoning Ordinance to reflect the current needs of the City and to reflect any changes desired as a result of the new Master Plan/Action Plan.
3. Blend the best elements of the past with the current and future needs of the City, to produce the desired sense of community and character as Ionia continues to grow.
4. Unify the past and current efforts of various community groups and community initiatives in order to adopt a Master Plan/Action Plan to guide future growth and development of the City of Ionia.

On March 23, 2000, a community wide visioning session was held in the Ionia Armory and approximately 45 people attended to discuss their vision for the future of Ionia. The results of this visioning session are contained in the Appendix. Also in the year 2000, several workshops

were held to solicit comments from four identified neighborhoods within the City and work sessions were held with the Ionia DDA, the Ionia Free Fair Board, business and industry leaders and the Historic Preservation Commission.

A public hearing on the Draft Plan was held on April 30, 2001.

Based on the information provided from the participants at these meetings, strategies and action steps were prepared and are contained in the section of this plan entitled Action Plan. The implementation of the Action Plan strategies over the course of time will be a strong determinant in how the City develops and prospers in the coming years.

The 2001 Ionia Master Plan also makes recommendations for future land use outside of the existing City boundaries. It is outside of these boundaries where most of the growth has occurred and will occur in the future. This growth will have a strong impact on the City and through its Act 425 agreements, the City is in a position to influence and guide future land use development on its borders. The 2001 Master Plan provides a strong policy document to guide City decision makers in achieving a logical land use arrangement.

CHAPTER 1

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Regional Context

The City of Ionia is located in central Ionia County, Michigan and serves as the County Seat. The City is surrounded primarily by Ionia Township, while Easton Township borders the City on the west. State of Michigan highway M-66 runs north and south through the City, while State highway M-21 runs east and west through the City. Interstate expressway I-96 is located approximately six and one-half miles south of the City corporate line. The Grand Rapids metropolitan area lies approximately 30 miles to the west, and the Lansing metropolitan area lies approximately 32 miles to the southeast.

The City of Ionia provides shopping and services for area residents, with a variety of retail and service businesses located within the central business district as well as along major streets within the City limits. A variety of employment opportunities exist within and near the City, including manufacturing, retail, business, educational, health services, and government. The largest employer, Michigan Department of Corrections, employs approximately 2,551 workers.

Water Resources and Topography

The Grand River flows along the southern boundary of the City, while Prairie Creek runs along much of the eastern boundary of the City. The broad floodplain of the Grand River varies from 2000 to 4000 feet in width, with elevations of 620-645 feet. The terrain within the City rises rapidly to the north reaching elevations of 800-820 feet. The remaining lands in the northern portion of the City are characterized by a rolling landscape.

Soils

According to the US Department of Agriculture Soil Survey, the City of Ionia is comprised of three different soil associations. Within the limits of the Grand River floodplain, the soil found is the Carlisle-Cohoctah-Sloan association which is very poorly drained organic-loamy soils. The central and northern portions of the City are composed of the Miami-Celina-Marlette association which is moderate to well drained loamy soils. The eastern portion of the City is composed of the Mancelona-Fox-Boyer association, which is well drained loamy soils underlain by sand and gravel courses. The approximate limits of these soils can be seen on the Soils Map, in the Appendix, which is reprinted from the Ionia Community Recreation Plan 1998-2003.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population

The population of the City of Ionia, according to 2000 US Census figures, was 10,569 persons. This includes the population of the Michigan Correctional Facilities in Ionia which is about 5,107 persons. Table 1 illustrates population changes for the City of Ionia and surrounding communities for the years from 1990 and 2000.

The large increase in the City of Ionia's population is attributable to the five State of Michigan Correctional facilities which came under City jurisdiction in the 1990's. These facilities were located in the adjoining Townships of Easton and Berlin. A decrease in the 2000 Census population for these townships is reflected in Table 1.

Without the population of the correctional facilities, it would appear that the City's population grew very little. City officials were seeking additional verification of this at the time of the adoption of this Plan.

Building permits for new dwellings issued over the last ten years by the City of Ionia (Table 5) show only a total of 175 new dwellings for an average of 17.5 per year. Based on this alone, there appears to be a positive growth rate in the City.

The following information is taken from the 1990 US Census as only population numbers were available from the 2000 Census in April of 2001.

As more 2000 Census data becomes available, it will be added to the Plan.

Age distribution for residents of the City are shown in Graph 1. A fairly large portion of the population (30.7%) is in the 25-44 years age group, a group typically considered to be of child-bearing age. Ionia exhibits a typical range of age groups without any significant over-representation within any one group. The median age of persons in the City is 30.9 years, while the median age of persons in Ionia County as a whole is 29.9 years.

Income

The 1990 median household income in the City of Ionia in 1989 was \$23,614 compared to a County-wide median household income of \$29,430. The 1990 per capita income for the City of Ionia was \$10,609 while County-wide per capita income reached \$10,896. Therefore, incomes within Ionia are somewhat lower than incomes in the County as a whole.

Within the City of Ionia, 16.3% of all persons for which poverty status was determined were found to be below the poverty level for income. This figure represents 942 persons of the 5,779 people for which poverty status was determined. Of those 942 persons, 530 (57%) were persons age 18 and older, while 403 (43%) were related children under 18 years.

In the County as a whole, 11.3% of the population for which poverty status was determined are living below the poverty level. Of this group, 59% were persons age 18 years and older while 38% were children under 18 years of age. These figures indicate that the City of Ionia had a

somewhat higher percentage than the County as a whole of children under the age of 18 living in households with incomes below the poverty level

Table 2 shows a summary of income and poverty data for the City of Ionia.

Employment

The available labor force in the City of Ionia (persons age 16 years and above) according to the 1990 US Census was 4,330 persons or 73% of the population in. Of this labor force, 9.7% or 420 persons were unemployed in 1990. This compares to a County-wide unemployment rate of 7.7% for the same year. According to this data, the City has a somewhat higher unemployment rate than the County as a whole.

When analyzed according to occupation, the City employs the largest numbers of persons in positions of machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors; protective service occupations; administrative support staff; and a variety of service occupations. When analyzed according to industry, the City offers the greatest numbers of positions in retail trade, manufacturing of durable goods, and public administration.

Public wage and salary workers make up 31% of employed persons in the City. This number reflects the State of Michigan Department of Corrections presence in the City, as well as Ionia County Government and City of Ionia employees. A number of Federal employees also reside within the City. The remaining 71% of employed persons are primarily private wage and salary workers.

Table 3 shows a summary of the 1992 Economic Census Area Profile for Ionia County as a whole. Table 4 shows the retail, wholesale, and services activity in the Cities of Ionia, Belding, Portland, and in the County as a whole. Table 5 shows major employers within the City.

Housing

According to the 1990 US Census, the City of Ionia had 2,412 total housing units. At the time of the 1990 US Census, 2,263 or 93.8% of those housing units were occupied. Of those occupied housing units, 1,383 or 57.3% were owner occupied while 880 or 36.5% were renter occupied. The number of vacant housing units in Ionia at that time was 149 or 6.2%. Over half of the total housing units (1,480) are 50 years old or older.

The predominant type of housing in the City, as one would suspect, is the single-unit detached home. The next most prominent type of housing is the 2 to 4 unit-attached dwellings. Multiple-unit dwellings of more than four units, single unit attached dwellings, and mobile homes make up the balance of dwelling units in the City. A summary of housing types found in the City is shown in Graph 3.

Of the 5,935 persons living in Ionia in 1990, 5,765 lived in a household while 170 persons lived in some type of group housing arrangement such as foster care or nursing care.

The average number of persons per household within the City is 2.55 persons. This compares to a County-wide average of 2.81 persons per household.

Table 1

**POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR
CITY OF IONIA AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES**

	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>No. Increase</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>Persons per Year</u>
Ionia County	57,024	61,518	4,494	8.2%	585
Ionia City	5,935	10,569	4,634	78.1%	463
Bal. of Ionia Twp.	3,153	3,669	516	16.4%	52
Orange Twp.	1,047	1,040	-7	-0.6%	
Berlin Twp.	3,610*	2,787	-823	-22.8%	
Easton Twp.	5,384*	2,835	-2,549	-47.3%	

Source: US Census Data

* Note: Figures include residents of State of Michigan Department of Corrections Facilities.

Table 2

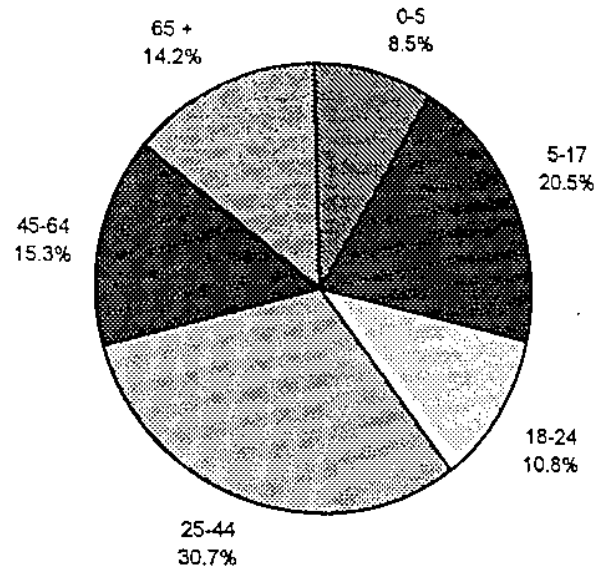
INCOME AND POVERTY DATA FOR CITY OF IONIA AND IONIA COUNTY

	<u>Median Household Income</u>	<u>Per Capita Income</u>	<u>% Persons Below Poverty Level</u>
City of Ionia	\$23,614	\$10,609	16.3%
Ionia County	\$29,430	\$10,896	11.3%

Source: 1990 US Census Bureau

GRAPH 1

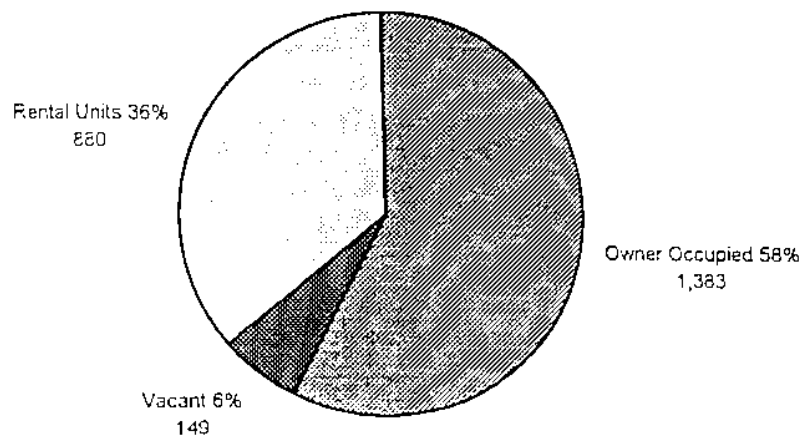
AGE OF RESIDENTS - CITY OF IONIA



Source: 1990 US Census data

GRAPH 2

HOUSING - CITY OF IONIA



Source: 1990 US Census data

Table 3

1992 ECONOMIC CENSUS - AREA PROFILE

IONIA COUNTY, MI

Sector	# of Establishments	Sales / Receipts (\$mil.)	# of Jobs
Manufacturing	78	601	3,900
Wholesale	50	124	349
Retail	253	249	2,511
Services	204	54	1,281

Table 4

TOP PLACES IN IONIA COUNTY, MI IN TERMS OF 1992 POPULATION

Geo. Area	Pop. 1992	RETAIL		WHOLESALE		SERVICES	
		# of Est.	Sales (\$mil.)	# of Est.	Sales (\$mil.)	# of Est.	Receipts. (\$mil.)
Belding	6,202	41	42	5	3	40	12
Ionia	6,077	88	103	12	7	75	23
Portland	3,956	34	40	11	35	29	5
Balance of County	41,751	90	65	22	79	60	13

Source: County Business Patterns 1992, US Census Bureau

Table 5

**RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS BY YEAR
CITY OF IONIA**

<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>
81(apt. units)	3	20	39	4	1
	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
	6	6	7	3	5
Total over 10 years:	81 apts. +94 single family homes 175				
Avg. over 10 years:	17.5 dwellings				
Source: City of Ionia					

Table 6

**CITY OF IONIA
MAJOR EMPLOYERS
(Industrial employers are in bold)**

<u>Firm Name</u>	<u>Product/Service</u>	<u>Approximate # of Employees</u>
Michigan Department of Corrections	Penal Institution	2,551
Meridian Automotive Systems, Inc.	Auto Metal Stampings	1,875
Brown Corp. of America	Metal Stampings & Assembly	330
Ionia County Memorial Hospital	Hospital	224
Independent Bank Corp	Banking Institution	205
Ionia Public School	Education	190
Ionia County National Bank	Banking Institution	105
County of Ionia	Public Administration	105
Connell Ltd.	Wear Plates, Die Guides	103
		99
Integral Engr. & Mfg. Corp.	Machine Tool Access., Cut, Meas. Devices	80
City of Ionia	Public Administration	68
Michigan Employment Security Agency	Public Agency	61
Volcor Finishing, Inc.	Metal Coating	53
State of Michigan - Family Indep. Agency	Public Agency	42
Orion Manufacturing, Inc.	Metal Stamping & Welded Assemblies	28
Ionia Sentinel Standard Inc.	Newspapers: Publishing and/or Printing	28
Kay Distributing, Inc.	Candy, Chocolate, Not Solid	25
Rural Bottled Gas & Appliance	Welding Equipment & Supplies	19
Tracy Products, Inc.	Tools, Dies, Jigs, Fixtures, Ind'l. Molds	12

In addition, the City has 200 Employers with 1-20 employees

Source: City of Ionia; 1999 Michigan Manufacturers Directory

CHAPTER 2

EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

This chapter describes how land use has changed in the City of Ionia since the 1975 Master Plan was completed as well as some of the concerns and issues noted during the preparation of this plan. This chapter provides a broad overview of changes, trends and issues to assist in the recommendations made in the Future Land Use chapter. Chapter 5, Action Plan, contains a more detailed review of City issues and concerns and a very useful list of action strategies and who will implement them.

Since 1975...

Since 1975, the City has grown primarily through annexation and Act 425 agreements. Map 1 illustrates the City boundaries and those areas which have been included in the City through Act 425 agreements. Some of the major additions to the City have been the Michigan Correctional Facilities located east and southeast of the City proper, multi family and industrial along north M-66 and some single family residential land located in the northeast quadrant of the City east of Morse Street.

In the late 1990's, the City began to increase its Act 425 holdings by providing utilities to the area south of the Grand River extending into Ionia Township. In particular, Ionia High School has been added to the City as a 425 component and a proposed apartment project (the Abbey) south of Tuttle Road was approved as an Act 425 agreement in early 2001.

Act 425 agreements generally are initiated by property owners wishing to obtain City services. Because these requests can occur on an individual and somewhat hap-hazard basis, it is important that City officials plan outside their current boundaries for land uses which meet City goals and result in proper land use planning.

RESIDENTIAL

The current land use pattern within the City of Ionia consists of compact urban development served by paved streets, sidewalks and other urban amenities such as neighborhood parks, street lights and schools within a walkable distance of residential areas. Since 1975, however, a number of single family owner occupied neighborhoods have deteriorated as the zoning for these areas changed to permit the single family homes to convert to multi family dwelling units. An example of this is on West Washington Street and to a lesser extent along West Main. The houses on these streets are on lots that can easily accommodate a single family dwelling, but when converted to three and four family dwellings, there is simply not enough room to accommodate the vehicles owned by the residents. Due to absentee landlords, the dwellings have been allowed to deteriorate and vehicles are often parked on the front lawns which downgrades the visual aesthetics of the neighborhood.

CITY OF IONIA



Map 1



Ionia City Limits

- Streets & Roads
- State Hwy
- RAILROAD
- Grand River
- <all other values>

CORPLIMIT

- CITY 425 AREA
- CITY OF IONIA LIMIT

Jurisdictional Boundaries
of
City of Ionia



1:27,106

April 2004
City of Ionia

Another area of concern is along East Main and East Washington which are neighborhoods of large, historic single family detached dwellings. The zoning in this area has been changed to allow the conversion of these homes to either two family or multiple family dwellings. These dwellings represent a significant historical heritage for the City of Ionia and the zoning in this area, if allowed to continue, could result in the conversion of these houses to apartments. If the same pattern of deterioration occurs here as has happened on West Washington, the City will experience a significant loss of its heritage.

The zoning also creates a problem for existing single family homes in the area north of East Washington, south of East Lincoln between Jefferson and Baldie where the zoning allows the conversion of single family homes to duplex units. The majority of these houses are all single family owner occupied and while there is certainly a need for rental units within this neighborhood, the zoning permits a wholesale conversion to duplex units without proper City review.

It is worth noting that areas that have been brought into the City under Act 425, notably Gregmark Lane and Skyview Trail and White Tail Court consist of lots significantly larger than found in the remainder of the City. Except for Gregmark, these streets do not have sidewalks although street lights have been provided. There is a need for more lot sizes which are closer in size to those in the rest of the City. This lot size would range from 12,000 to 8,000 square feet. Such lots would be more affordable to a larger percentage of Ionia buyers.

COMMERCIAL

Commercial uses are concentrated in the downtown area and along the major highways, M-66 and M-21. There are several smaller neighborhood convenience stores located throughout the City and these serve a very useful function.

The trend of commercial development appears to be occurring outside the City limits on M-66 south of the City. These lands are located in Berlin, Ionia and Orange Townships. At this writing, none of these townships have an active zoning laws although Orange Township may do so in the year 2001. The City has extended water and sanitary sewer to this area. By extending utilities, the City is in a position through Act 425 agreements to influence not only the land use, but the design of these developing commercial areas and more importantly, how access is obtained along heavily traveled M-66.

INDUSTRIAL

Since 1975, the City has lost several large manufacturing facilities, in particular, GenCorp, located on M-66 at the intersection of Adam Street and Bird Fertilizer and Anderson Fertilizer. This area was recently converted to commercial and office uses with the extension of Adam Street in the year 2000. The Orchard View Industrial Park which consists of about 50 acres was added to the City through an Act 425 agreement and currently contains three industries and the 911 Ionia County Dispatch offices. Industrial development has occurred west of the City along Beardsly Road with the addition of several manufacturing developments notably Orion and Meridian.

Information about industrial land use issues are better explained in the industrial component of the action plan. Of particular concern is the amount of truck traffic both through the City and across the City between the various manufacturing plants which has created some congestion on M-66, M-21 and local city streets.

UTILITIES

The City of Ionia operates its own wastewater treatment plants and water well system. The wastewater treatment plant is located just north of the Ionia Free Fair property. The plant has a capacity of treating four million gallons per day. The plant was last upgraded in 1991. In the year 2000, the plant had an average daily flow of 2.3 million gallons per day.

The State of Michigan is set to open a new correctional facility which will become operational in the year 2002. Projections by City officials are that this facility will utilize approximately 350,000 gallons per day of the 1.7 million gallons per day remaining capacity of the treatment plant. While it may appear that there is sufficient capacity to serve future uses in and adjacent to the City, a large development such as a new industrial use could quickly use up this remaining capacity.

Currently the City does not have a policy regarding the ultimate extension of its sewer and water lines to areas outside the City. However, there is sufficient land for expansion of the wastewater treatment plant and any expansion would need to be paid for by those requesting the City services. The utilization of the remaining wastewater treatment plant capacity will need to be carefully monitored as the City continues to service areas outside its limits through Act 425 Agreements.

The City water wells are located north of Fargo Street and east of Ridgewood in an area that is elevated above the majority of the City. The City has five elevated water towers and two ground water tanks. The wells are capable of producing five million gallons per day and are currently pumping two million gallons per day. Additional wells have been drilled but are currently not in service but can easily be brought into line when the need arises.

CHAPTER 3

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This chapter contains descriptions, recommendations, and justification for future land use in the City of Ionia. These recommendations will provide an overall framework for the management and regulation of future development and also serve as the basis for evaluating zoning requests.

These recommendations were influenced by a number of factors:

- The viewpoints, concerns and suggestions of Ionia residents which were voiced at a community wide workshop in March of 2000 as well as neighborhood workshops held during the summer of 2000;
- Input from a number of City business groups, the Citizens Advisory Commission on Historic Preservation, and the Ionia Free Fair Board;
- The location and availability of public utilities;
- An analysis of existing circumstances and future needs;
- The influence of nearby Townships;
- The natural features of the City of Ionia especially the Grand River and the topography;
- State Highways M-66 and M-21.

MASTER PLAN CONCEPTS

The Future Land Use Maps, Maps 2 and 3 are based upon several major concepts for the future development for the City of Ionia. These concepts are derived from the Action Plan Goals and Strategies for the various Plan components (DDA, Industrial, Neighborhood, and Historic Preservation), discussion with the Planning Commission and the need to provide direction for the development and re-development of the City of Ionia in the coming years.

These major land use concepts include the following:

- The preservation of single family neighborhoods is a high priority and two, three and four family dwellings can provide for a variety of housing types but are not appropriate in all neighborhoods. Such uses should be allowed but only if they are compatible in design and function.
- As the City expands outside its current boundaries, a set of utility policies and zoning rules are needed to ensure that the existing pattern of compact urban development is maintained and that new residential developments do not become merely a collection of unrelated suburban housing projects. These regulations can help maintain a sense of identity and community.
- The need to provide living opportunities for a growing elderly population so that housing for retired people, assisted living facilities and nursing homes can be located where they will be

compatible with adjacent residential uses. Such housing needs to be in areas with a residential character with support facilities and amenities close by for easy access.

- Truck traffic through the City needs to be minimized.

The Municipal Planning Act, Public Act 285 of 1931, as amended, specifically gives City Planning Commissions the authority to prepare and officially adopt a plan. When prepared, officially adopted, and maintained, this Plan should provide an advisory guide for the physical conservation of certain areas and for the development of other areas into the best possible living environment for present and future City residents.

Planning Outside City Boundaries

Act 285 also charges City Planning Commissions to include “any areas outside of its boundaries which, in the Commission’s judgment, bear relation to the planning of the municipality.” The City of Ionia Master Plan therefore includes areas adjacent to the City which when developed will likely have an impact on City services and residents. The future land uses recommended for these areas are not meant to indicate a direct desire for future annexation but rather a desire to cooperate with adjacent municipalities to coordinate planning along common boundaries for the benefit of each municipality.

By planning for the future use of land outside its boundaries, City officials are in a better position to evaluate the impact and benefits of requests for Act 425 agreements. Such requests have resulted in enlarging the area which the City controls and the Future Land Use Plan will help ensure that this “growth” is properly analyzed to meet the City’s goals.

Because of the constant change in our social and economic structure and activities, the Plan must be maintained through periodic review and revision so that it reflects contemporary trends while maintaining long range goals.

The Future Land Use Plan is both general and precise in its scope. Within the existing City limits, the Plan lines are drawn to show the exact location of some future zoning districts. For those areas outside the City limits, the Plan boundaries are more general in scope with the future zoning lines determined at the time a rezoning is requested.

It is also important to note that there is no schedule to implement the recommendations contained here. The timing of a particular land use is dependent upon a number of factors such as availability of public utilities, provisions for adequate roadways, effect on public services, environmental impact and the demand for a particular land use versus the available land zoned for this use. Those, plus other factors, must be considered when reviewing a request for rezoning a particular parcel of land.

As background information to the planning process, the following narrative provides an explanation of the relationship of land use planning to zoning.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF PLANNING TO ZONING

The relationship between land use planning and zoning is an important one. Planning is basically the act of planning the uses of land within a community for the future while zoning is the act of regulating the use of these lands by ordinance. The laws of the State of Michigan require that a community engage in land use planning activities, including the preparation of a comprehensive plan prior to the initiation of a zoning ordinance in a community.

The following narrative provides a better understanding of the terms “planning” and “zoning.”

Planning

The process of guiding the future growth and development of a community. Generally a document is prepared known as the Comprehensive Plan or Master Plan which addresses the various factors relating to the growth of a community. Through the process of land use planning, it is intended that a community can preserve, promote, protect, and improve the public health, safety, and general welfare. Additional considerations include: comfort, good order, appearance, convenience, law enforcement and fire protection, prevent the overcrowding of land and avoid undue concentration of population, facilitate the adequate and efficient provision of transportation, water, sewage requirements and service, and conserve, develop, utilize and protect natural resources within the community. A plan is a guide to development but it is not a legally enforceable document.

Zoning

Zoning is one of the instruments, along with capital improvements programming and the administration of local subdivision regulations, which implements the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan. Zoning regulations have the force of law. The enactment and administration of the zoning ordinance are legislative and administrative processes conducted by local units of government relating to the implementation of the goals and policies of the Master Plan.

Future Land Use Designations and Descriptions

The Future Land Use Map recommends a number of different future land use classifications. The following descriptions of these classifications explain the type, intensity and location of the proposed uses.

These future land use classifications will not automatically change the zoning for that area. The property owner will still need to apply to the City for a zoning change if the Future Land Use designation does not match the current zoning.

A property owner is still permitted to use the land as it is currently zoned even if the zoning is different from the Future Land Use designation.

The names of the Future Land Use designations do not always match the names of the zoning districts. The Future Land Use designations are intended to describe the type of land use recommended. For example, Single Family Low (SFL) means the land is proposed for single

family houses at low density. The zoning category, however, is R-3, Single Family Residential. The term R-3, however, does not properly describe how the land is proposed to be used so a more a more descriptive term is used.

<p>SINGLE FAMILY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (SFL)</p>

This future land use classification calls for single family detached houses at a maximum density of 2.64 dwelling units per acre. This category is analogous to the R3, One Family Residential Zoning District, which requires a minimum lot size of 16,500 square feet with 100 feet of lot width.

This area needs to be served by public sewer and water for this minimum lot size. If an area is developed in this category without public sewer or water, the plan recommends a minimum lot size of 30,000 square feet and 132 feet of width. SFL areas are well suited outside of the current City boundaries in areas that abut vacant land or larger lots developed in adjoining townships. The density proposed matches up better with land in adjoining townships than other single family classifications.

SFL areas should be designed in a traditional City neighborhood fashion with sidewalks, street trees and lights and areas set aside for neighborhood recreation. This should be done under the City's Open Space Neighborhood zoning regulation.

All of the single family residential areas proposed in the Master Plan would also permit other land uses which are typically found within single family neighborhoods. These uses would be schools, parks and playgrounds, as well as churches.

The Master Plan recommends that within all of the categories which permit single family and multi-family houses that elderly housing, assisted living and nursing homes also be permitted where the design of such buildings can create compatibility with adjacent residential uses. Because of the significant number of people approaching retirement age in the not too distant future, the need for housing for older Americans is critical. Such housing needs to be in areas of residential character where other amenities are nearby and can be reached easily by foot or by vehicle.

Rather than recommend specific areas for elderly housing, the Plan proposes to allow them in all areas where single and multi-family uses are permitted to expand the opportunities to locate where land becomes available.

The Master Plan also recommends that two family dwellings be an integral part of the City's residential areas to allow for a variety of living opportunities. To ensure compatibility with single family houses, a Special Use Permit will be required so the Planning Commission can review such requests on a case by case basis.

<p>SINGLE FAMILY</p>

**MEDIUM DENSITY
RESIDENTIAL
(SFM)**

This classification is analogous to the R-2, One Family Residential zoning category. This category would permit single family detached houses as the predominant use with minimum lot sizes of 12,000 square feet and 80 feet of width. This is a density of 3.63 dwelling units per acre.

The Plan recognizes the existing SFM areas in the City which are primarily on the north side of M-21. These areas are served, and are intended to be served, by public water and sanitary sewer. Traditional city amenities such as sidewalks, street trees and playgrounds, need to be provided for this type of residential environment.

The Plan recommends that residential areas outside the City utilize the open space neighborhood concept which would permit a reduction of lot sizes and a slight increase in density in exchange for providing village green areas, walking trails or preservation of natural site features for use by residents of the neighborhood.

Maps 7 and 8 illustrate areas which should be rezoned to R-2 as these areas are more characteristic of R-2 land uses than the current zoning.

**SINGLE FAMILY HIGH
DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
(SFH)**

This category is the most dense of the Single Family Residential areas recommended by the Master Plan. The SFH category is analogous to the R-1, One Family Residential Zoning District which requires a minimum lot size of 8,000 square feet with 65 feet of lot width. This is equal to a density of 5.44 dwelling units per acre.

Much of the City on the south side of M-21 has been developed under the R-1 zoning category. Public water and sanitary sewer are necessary to support this type of development along with other City amenities such as sidewalks, street trees, and playgrounds. The Plan recognizes these existing single family high density areas on the Future Land Use Map.

A major recommendation of the Plan is to designate and rezone several areas to the R-1 Zoning District category.

These areas to be rezoned to R-1 are illustrated on Maps 4, 5 and 6. One area is located on West Washington and is currently zoned for multi-family use. Many of the existing single family homes there have been converted to two or three and sometimes four family dwelling units. The Plan's recommendation to rezone this to the R-1 category would prohibit further conversions. It is the intent of the Plan that some of the multi-family units be re-converted to single family homes and provide stabilization of this neighborhood.

Area 7 which includes houses on M-21 between Hall Street and State (M-66) and houses on M-66 just north of M-21, is also recommended for rezoning to R-1. This rezoning is a recognition that the predominant land use is single family, owner occupied homes which are well kept. Rezoning to the R-1 category from the RT category will ensure that single family homes remain as a predominant land use and serve as an encouragement to the existing homeowners to retain and maintain their property.

New areas for SFH development outside of the City boundaries should be served by public water and sanitary sewer and the Plan strongly recommends that an open space neighborhood development scheme be followed to enhance the quality of life for neighborhood residents.

RESIDENTIAL (R)

This Future Land Use category applies to areas outside the existing City limits. The Plan recommends that these areas be developed with detached single family houses at densities ranging from Single Family Low (2.64 du/acre) to Single Family High (5.44 du/acre). These areas are included within the urban services district and are planned for city water and sewer services.

Such areas are likely to be annexed directly into the City or come under City control via a 425 Agreement. If this occurs, the Plan recommends that these residential areas be built with sidewalks, street trees and lights and on site recreational areas. The Open Space Neighborhood zoning regulations would be the most appropriate City zoning tool to use in assuring that these amenities are provided so that future neighborhoods can maintain a city appearance and function.

TWO FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (TF)
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This category recognizes the existing parts of the City which are currently zoned RT, Two Family Residential. The current zoning regulations allow conversion of single family dwellings to two family dwellings with site plan review by the Planning Commission. A fairly large portion of the City is currently zoned for RT. This area is located between M-21 and Lafayette and Jefferson High and Baldie Street.

The predominant land use within this area is still single family, owner occupied dwellings. The Plan recognizes the benefits of encouraging this type of land use and **therefore recommends that a change be made to the Zoning Ordinance to allow the conversion of single family homes to duplexes only with the granting of a Special Land Use by the Planning Commission.**

The Plan also recommends that standards be developed in the Zoning Ordinance which will minimize the visual and operational impact of conversions on nearby residences. These standards would include providing two off street parking spaces in the driveway (not in the front lawn area). Also, the appearance of the dwelling must remain that of a single family home as much as possible.

**MULTI FAMILY LOW
DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
(MFL)**

This Future Land Use category calls for two, three, and four family dwelling units to serve as areas of transition between major thoroughfares and/or commercial uses and nearby lower density residential uses. The MFL areas can also be appropriate where higher density apartments may not fit. These types of dwellings may be owner or renter occupied.

Locations for MFL areas are not shown on the Future Land Use Map, but the Plan recommends that they be allowed to serve as redevelopment projects where sufficient space exists to locate individual or small groups of two - four family dwellings with buildings and landscaping designed to be compatible with adjacent land uses. **The Zoning Ordinance will need to be amended to provide more specific standards for consideration by the City in evaluating requests for MFL developments.**

**MULTI FAMILY HIGH
DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
(MFH)**

This Future Land Use category is analogous to the RM-1, Multiple Family Residential Zoning District. This category would permit multi family dwellings, either owner or renter occupied as well as two family dwellings at a maximum density of 15 dwelling units per acre. The Plan also recommends that elderly housing and assisted living facilities be permitted in this zone as a matter of right. Such uses need public water and sanitary sewer and need to be located where they can be adequately served by minor or arterial or collector City streets with minimal impact on any nearby single family houses.

The Plan recognizes the existing apartment projects in the City and recommends that an additional area be developed for MFH at the corner of M-21 and Haynor within a Planned Unit Development zoning category and at M-66 and Bellevue Street and on Tuttle Road east of Ionia High School. These areas could also be built as PUD's.

**OFFICE
(O)**

This category would permit only offices. Such uses can serve as useful transitions between retail and residential or a busy road and residential. Offices may also be a more appropriate land use

on a heavily traveled street than a retail or service use as an office may generate fewer turning movements. This category would allow all generally recognized office uses. Medical clinics and similar uses which provide health care may be subject to a special land use due to the higher traffic volumes generated.

**CENTRAL BUSINESS
DISTRICT
(CBD)**

This Future Land Use category encompasses the downtown area of Ionia. The CBD is the older established retail portion of the City in contrast to the strip commercial development along North Dexter and M-21. Both retail and office uses are permitted in this category subject to the specific regulations of the B-1 Zoning District.

The Plan recommends that an amendment be made to the Zoning Ordinance to permit residential uses to be established on the upper floors in downtown buildings. This will aid property owners and business people in extending and promoting the full use of their buildings.

The CBD area is also part of the City of Ionia Downtown Development Authority. Specific action plan steps are set forth in Chapter 5 of this Master Plan.

**GENERAL
COMMERCIAL
(GC)**

This Future Land Use category includes those areas currently zoned B-1, Neighborhood Business District and B-3, General Business District. The Plan, however, does not distinguish between the two districts as they are very similar in their regulations except that the B-3 category would permit open air business type uses which generally need more exposure to passing traffic. The Master Plan recognizes existing commercial uses and recommends their extension along M-66 to the south of the City. New commercial development within these categories particularly along M-66 need to be carefully regulated for access control, landscaping and lighting.

Some additional commercial land is recommended on M-21 at Haynor Road west of the existing City limits. This site can serve traffic entering and leaving the City via M-21 and can also provide convenience commercial shopping opportunities for the population in this part of the City.

**PLANNED
NEIGHBORHOOD
COMMERCIAL
(PNC)**

A neighborhood convenience shopping center offers consumer convenience goods, foods and pharmacy, as well as personal services such as laundry and dry cleaning, barbering and shoe

repairing, for daily living needs of an immediate neighborhood. The amount of gross leasable area in a neighborhood convenience shopping center may range from 5,000 to 10,000 square feet. The site area for a neighborhood convenience shopping center should range between two to four acres and the support population will range from 3,000 to 6,000 persons within a ten minute driving time.

Neighborhood convenience shopping facilities normally serve a grouping of adjacent residential neighborhoods and are usually located adjacent to an arterial or collector street for convenient accessibility.

The Master Plan recommends a Planned Neighborhood Commercial area on Jefferson north of North Street to serve the convenience shopping needs of future residents in this portion of the City and adjacent Ionia Township. This location offers good access via Jefferson Street and will be convenient for future residents and will provide a destination for children.

This future development should only be approved as a Special Land Use meeting certain standards. These standards would be pedestrian and bicycle access from adjoining residential areas, a design which fits the neighborhood character, and proper landscaping setbacks and lighting.

When properly designed, neighborhood shopping facilities should pose only minimal impacts to adjacent residential areas while catering to the day to day shopping needs of the residents.

However, such facilities should only be authorized when adequate accessibility exists, when similar competing facilities are not found within a radius of several miles, when compatibility with adjacent residential neighborhoods is demonstrated and when an adequate support population of residents and/or employees exists within a radius of one mile. It is recommended that developments of proposed planned neighborhood shopping centers demonstrate that a need exists for the proposed facility through the use of a market analysis.

INDUSTRIAL (I)

This Master Plan category recognizes those existing industrial land use areas in the City. No new industrial land is planned within the City boundaries as of the date of adoption of this plan. **However, areas to the south of the City just north of the Ionia County airport are recommended for future industrial use.**

This area is suitable for industrial because of its access from M-66 and the fact that utilities exist to the north and can be easily extended to the site. The closeness of the Ionia County airport is also a benefit for future industrial land use in this area and proximity to I-96.

The Master Plan recommends most of the new industrial use to the south of the City in order to avoid truck traffic through the City which would occur if industrial use had been planned to the north of the Grand River.

This future industrial area is currently located within Orange Township. In 2000, the Orange Township Planning Commission adopted a Master Plan which recommended industrial use for this same area. The Ionia Master Plan is a recognition of the Orange Township Plan and that development of this area can best proceed if utilities are provided by the City.

An area in Easton Township on M-66 opposite Orchard View Industrial Park would be suitable for future industrial use due to highway access, availability of utilities and compatibility with adjacent land uses.

<p>PUBLIC, SEMI- PUBLIC (P)</p>

This category refers to land devoted to governmental, institutional, recreational, or similar activities generally deemed to be in the public interest such as public buildings, schools, parks, cemeteries, and utility rights-of-way. These uses vary in size and are located throughout the City as illustrated on the Future Land Use Plan. Many of these uses are located in residential land use areas. The largest such public uses are the Ionia Fairgrounds and the State of Michigan Correctional Facilities.

Public uses can convert and have converted to private uses over the years. If such a request comes before the Planning Commission, the Commissioners should consider adjacent land uses as extending logically to public use areas in order to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses and protect neighborhood character as well.

<p>FLOOD PLAIN (FP)</p>

This classification illustrates the approximate limits of the 100 year flood plain of the Grand River as it flows through the City of Ionia. Development within this area can only proceed if construction can meet the requirements of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The existing zoning within the flood plain is industrial and the Flood Plain Zoning District would overlay the industrial category.

<p>UTILITY SERVICES DISTRICT (USD)</p>

A major concept of the Ionia Master Plan is the establishment of an Utility Services District which extends about one half to one mile beyond the current City limits. The land uses within this area are intended to be given priority and favorable consideration for service by public water and sanitary sewer, over those uses outside the boundary line.

The Service District, therefore, establishes the long-term limits of the extension of public utilities from the City of Ionia into Ionia, Easton, Berlin and Orange Townships. The boundaries were based on the land uses planned for certain areas, existing development trends and land uses, and a need to plan for utility service areas to more accurately design the expansion of the City's Wastewater Treatment system. Residential uses planned for these areas would be developed at a density not to exceed four dwellings per acre.

Defining the limits of future utility extensions does several things:

1. It serves to notify developers that utilities will not readily be extended beyond this boundary line,
2. It allows the communities within the service area to better plan the provision of utilities in the future and;
3. It also assures that urban sprawl will not spill over into rural residential and prime agricultural areas thereby protecting areas for farming activities and rural densities.
4. It helps City officials determine the long term needs for City sewer and water. This allows for more efficient and economical utility planning.

Certain low intensive uses within the utility service area such as single family houses on acreage lots will not be required to have public sewer but those land uses which develop according to the Future Land Use Plan should be served by public utilities.

There is no schedule to extend public utilities outside the City limits and the mechanisms to do so are dependent upon cooperation between the City and adjacent townships. The areas which are within the Service District, however, can be served by public water and sewer in several ways:

1. These areas could be annexed into the City of Ionia.
2. These areas could remain within the Townships and the Townships contract for utility service;
3. The City and Township could enter into an Act 425 Agreement whereby the property could remain in the Township, the City provides the utilities, or other services and the two municipalities share the property tax revenues. This practice has been done successfully in recent years.

The provision of other urban type services such as police, trash pick-up, and parks and recreation within the Township portion of the utility service area are again subject to the cooperation of the City and the Townships.

It is not the intent or purpose of this study to identify or recommend those Township properties within the Service District which could be annexed by the City. The Service District is meant

instead to set forth the limits of future utility extensions, and therefore, manage growth in an orderly fashion.

By establishing a Utility Service District the plan is recognizing that certain land uses such as commercial or low density residential do require a greater degree of public services than do rural uses. Single Family areas will require public water and sanitary sewer as the minimum lot sizes in these areas are not meant to allow for long term wells and septic systems. Public water and sewer, therefore, will serve to protect the health and safety of residents over the long term.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION

In order for the Master Plan to serve as an effective guide to the continued development of the City of Ionia it must be implemented. Primary responsibility for implementing the Plan rests with the Ionia City Council, the Planning Commission, and the municipal staff. This is done through a number of methods, which include ordinances, programs, and administrative procedures later described in this chapter.

It is important to note that the Master Plan itself has no legal authority to regulate development in order to implement the recommendations of the Plan. This implementation must come from the decisions of the City Council and Planning Commission to provide needed public improvements and to administer and establish regulatory measures relative to the use of the land.

The private sector, including individual home and land owners as well as developers, is also involved in fulfilling the recommendations of the Master Plan by the actual physical development of land uses and through the rezoning of land. The authority for this, however, comes from the City. Cooperation and coordination among individuals, private developers, and public agencies is, therefore, important in successful implementation of the Master Plan.

Chapter 5 of the Plan sets forth the Action Plan and Strategies which serve to guide the future development of the City of Ionia. Some of the recommendations of this chapter are taken from these objectives, while others are taken from recommendations made in Chapter 3, Future Land Use Plan.

The following sections identify the major activities which the City of Ionia Planning Commission should pursue in order to be pro-active in the implementation of this Master Plan.

The Plan recommends the following specific changes to the City Zoning Ordinance text and map.

1. The Planning Commission should sponsor changes to the Zoning Map to reflect the land uses recommended by the Future Land Use Map. Specifically, the Plan recommends that the areas shown on Maps 3-7 be rezoned by the City of Ionia as follows:
Area 1: Create a new zoning district for this area with regulations allowing the conversion of only single family houses to either two family or office/service use. The razing of existing houses to construct non-residential uses would not be permitted. Single family homes would be a permitted use within this small but specialized zoning districts. Any conversion of any single family house to either office or two family would be subject to a Special Use Permit by the Planning Commission.

Uses envisioned for this district would include professional and medical offices, studios for dance, photography, art or music, barber and beauty shops, art and craft stores and

tailor shops. Retail sales would only be permitted if incidental to the principal use. Other uses could be allowed by the Planning Commission if they were similar to the above uses and would require a small amount of parking and could be operated out of an existing house.

Owners or operators of these businesses would be permitted to live on the premises. Regulations for signs, off-street parking, lighting and landscaping would need to be carefully crafted to ensure that the impact of non-residential conversions on other nearby residents is kept to a minimum.

Area 2: Rezone this area from RT, Two Family Residential to R-1, One Family Residential.

Area 3: Rezone this area from RM-1, Multiple Family Residential to R-1, One Family Residential.

Area 4: Rezone this area from RM-1, Multiple Family Residential and R-1, One Family Residential to RT, Two Family Residential.

Area 5: Rezone this area from B-1, Neighborhood Business and I-1, Light Industrial to R-1, One-Family Residential.

Area 6: Rezone this area from RM-1, Multiple Family Residential to R-1, One family Residential.

Area 7: Rezone from RM-1, Multiple Family Residential to B-1, Neighborhood Business.

Area 8: Rezone from RM-1, Multiple Family Residential to R-1, One Family Residential.

Area 9: Rezone from RM-1, Multiple Family Residential to R-2, One Family Residential.

Area 10: Rezone from I-1, Light Industrial to R-2, One Family Residential.

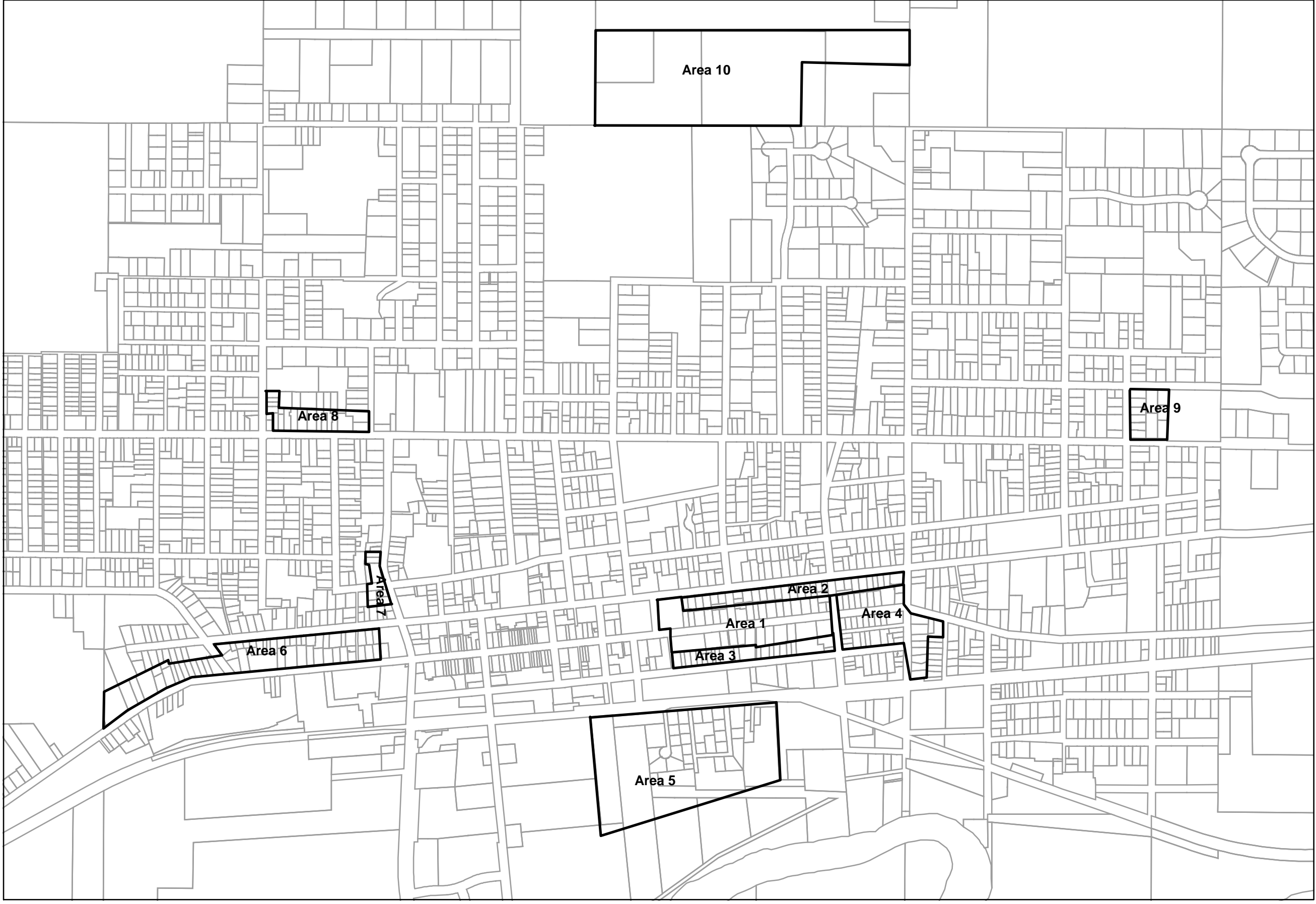
2. Amend the Zoning Map to illustrate the 100 year flood plain along the Grand River.
3. Concurrent with Item 1 above, the Planning Commission should sponsor the following amendments to the Zoning Ordinance text:
 - (a) Prepare a new zoning chapter to carry out the recommendations for Area 1.
 - (b) Permit apartments to be established above stores in the B-1 zoning district.
 - (c) Delete the Funeral Zone chapter.

- (d) Amend the R-1, R-2, R-3 and RT Chapters to allow duplexes as special uses and add criteria to ensure duplexes are compatible with surrounding neighborhood characteristics.
- (e) Prepare and adopt a zoning district for office uses only.
- (f) Lower the density in the RM-1 zone from 24.2 dwelling units per acre to 15 dwelling units per acre.
- (g) Delete the RM-2 chapter.
- (h) Delete the Single Family Use from the list of permitted uses in the RM zoning district.
- (i) Revise all zoning district chapters to update the list of permitted uses and create a list of special land uses permitted within each zoning district. Also create a Special Land Use chapter to set forth procedures and standards for approval of special land uses.
- (j) Allow elderly housing developments to be permitted within each zoning district except the industrial district.
- (k) Update the zoning regulations to better regulate sexually oriented businesses.
- (l) Review entire Zoning Ordinance to determine the need for additional definitions and regulations in view of the changes recommended by the Master Plan.

Additional Recommendations

1. The City of Ionia should initiate efforts to work with Ionia Township to annex those Ionia Township areas surrounded by City to square up City boundaries.
2. The Ionia City Council should consider adding a staff person to carry out the strategic action plan recommendations.
3. The City Manager and Chairperson of the Planning Commission should meet in January and July of each year to prepare a schedule to carry out the recommendations of the Master Plan and to monitor the progress of the implementation measures in the Plan.
4. The Planning Commission should begin discussions with the City Park Board regarding the future use of land near Dunsmore Lake.
5. The Planning Commission should prepare a report in January of each year listing its accomplishments of the preceding year. This “annual report” would be presented to the City Council. This annual report could serve to monitor the progress on the recommendations of the Master Plan.

6. The Master Plan should be reviewed every three years in order to be responsive to new growth trends and current citizen attitudes. As growth occurs over the years, the Plan's goals, land use information, population projections, and other pertinent data should be reviewed and revised as necessary so the Plan can continue to serve as a valid guide to the growth of the City.
7. The Planning Commissioners should be kept informed of planning seminars to learn how to better carry out their duties and responsibilities as Planning Commissioners. These seminars are regularly sponsored by the Michigan Society of Planning Officials (MSPO) and the Michigan Municipal League (MML) and are a valuable resource for Planning Commissions. There are also several planning publications which are useful information tools for Planning Commissioners. The main publications are Planning and Zoning News and Michigan Planner Magazine.



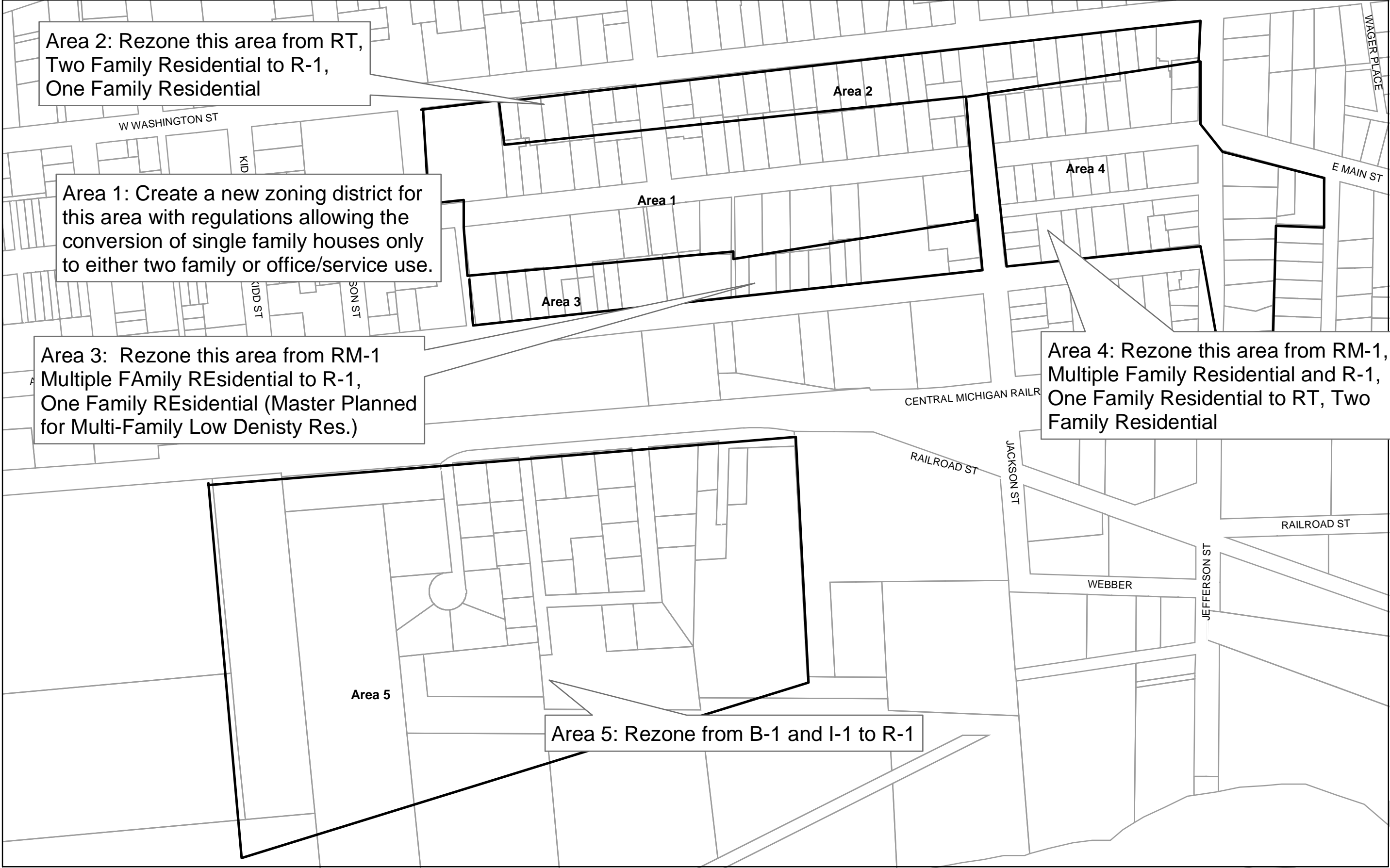
Map 2



Key
to
Area Maps



Map 3



Map 4



Area 7: Rezone from RM-1, Multiple Family Residential to B-1, Neighborhood Business

Area 7

Area 6

Area 6: Rezone this area from RM-1, Multiple Family Residential to R-1, One Family Residential

W LINCOLN ST (M-21)

NICHOLSON ST

RICE ST

KING ST

STATE ST

TAYL

HARTER ST

NORTH DEXTE

HACKETT ST

YEOMANS ST

KING ALLEY

STATE ST

MARSHALL CT

HIGH ST

W MAIN ST

ADAMS

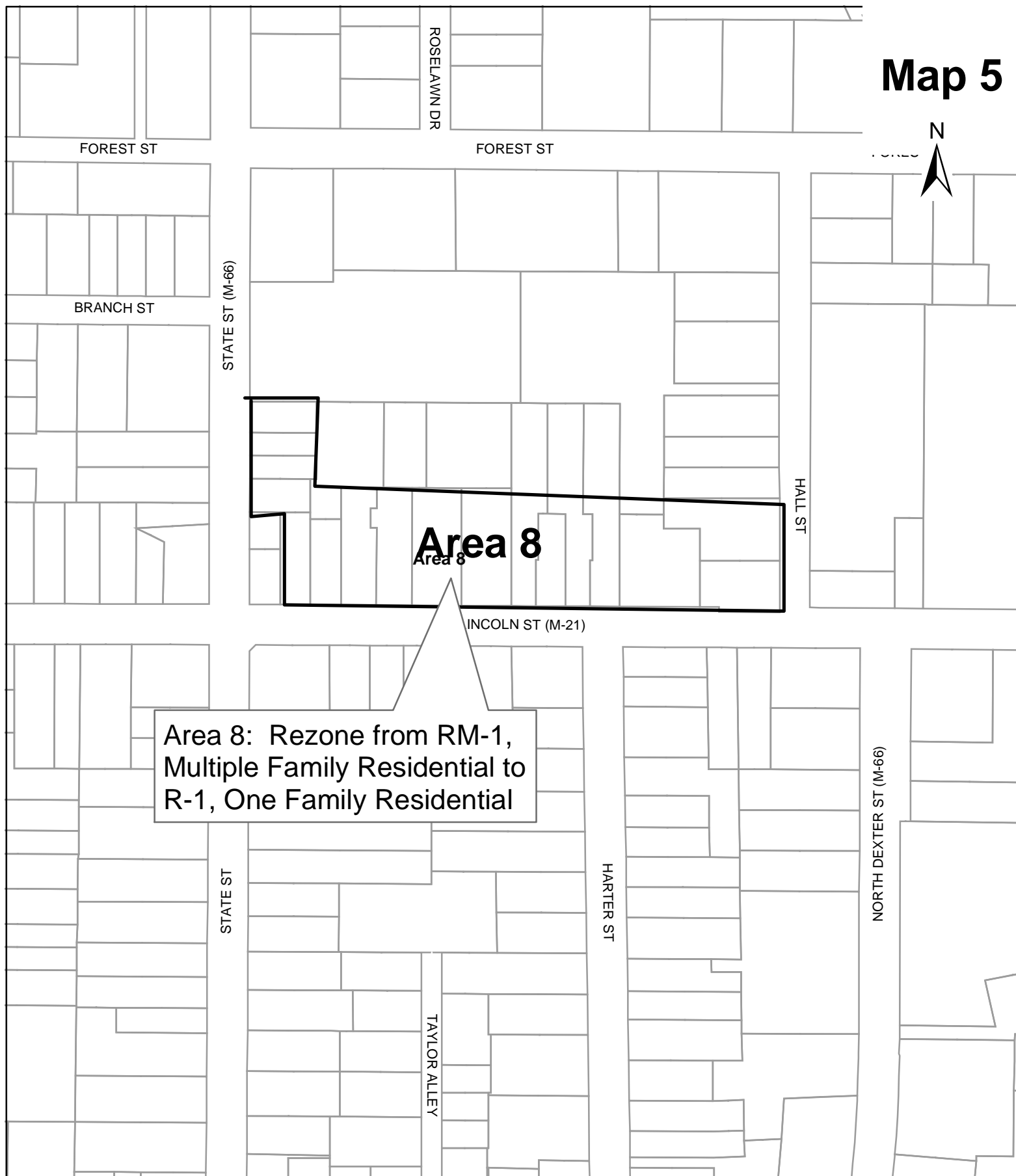
ADAMS ST

DEXTER ST (M-66)

WELLS ST.

CENTRAL

Map 5

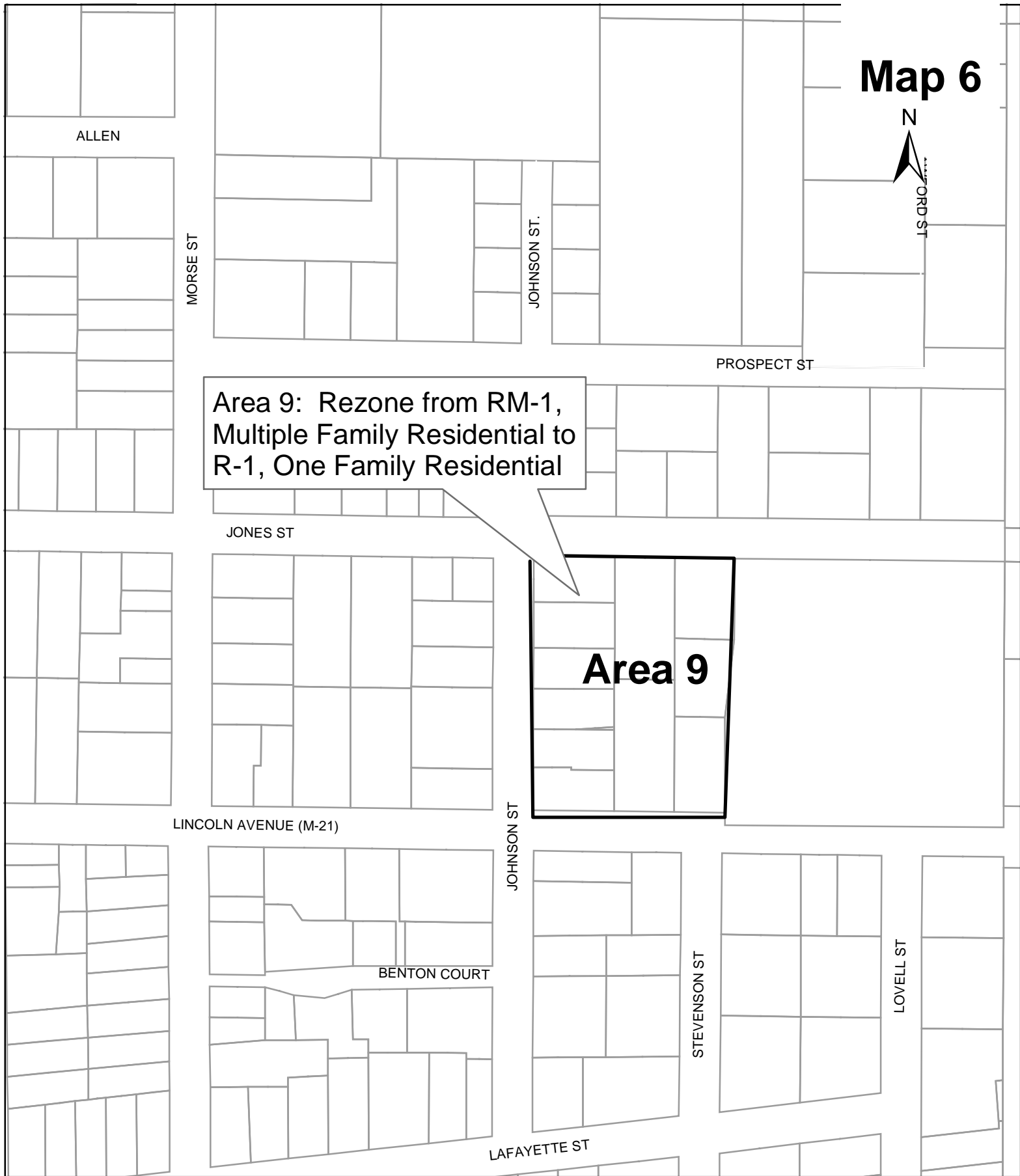


Map 6



Area 9: Rezone from RM-1,
Multiple Family Residential to
R-1, One Family Residential

Area 9



Map 7



Rezone from I-1 to R-2

Area 10

JEFFERSON ST

NORTH ST

HILL ST

OAKWOOD CT.

RIDGEWOOD DR

RIDGEWOOD CT

FARGO ST

RICH ST

FARGO ST

CHAPTER 5

ACTION PLAN

Goals, Actions, and Agents

A key portion of this Master Plan is the inclusion of an Action Plan, which could also be considered a Strategic Plan for the City's future. The Action Plan consist of five major components:

- Neighborhood Component
- Historic Preservation Component
- Downtown Development Component
- Free Fair Component
- Industry and Employment Component

In formulating goals for the Action Plan, the consultant met with key groups whose interests reflected the component areas. During these meetings, a variety of methods were used to gather information. These included identifying Strengths, Threats, and Desires, and then prioritizing desired actions.

The Action Plan will prove to be one of the City's most valuable tools, since it represents five of the most important elements in the fabric of the City. In addition, the Action Plan is specific in naming the Agents that will likely be most effective in carrying out the stated Actions. In carrying out the Actions, Agents should keep in mind that the approaches to reaching stated Goals can be modified and adjusted as necessary.

The Plan strongly recommends that the Action Plan be reviewed twice each year by the City Manager and Chairperson of the Planning Commission to ensure that progress is being made.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMPONENT

A Master Plan /Action Plan for a city the size of Ionia should address issues at the neighborhood level as well as city-wide issues. The needs of residents in various parts of the city can vary significantly. Planning on a neighborhood level can address issues such as particular street segments, conditions of sidewalks, locations of neighborhood parks, and neighborhood pride.

Two neighborhood workshops were held on June 24 and July 8, 2000 at the Ionia City Hall. Wards One and Two met on June 24, and Wards three and Four met on July 8. A combined total of approximately 35 persons attended the two workshops. The persons who attended these workshops initially met as a large group to hear background data regarding the City, and then broke down into small groups to identify issues particular to their neighborhoods. The locations of the wards are shown on the map at the end of this chapter.

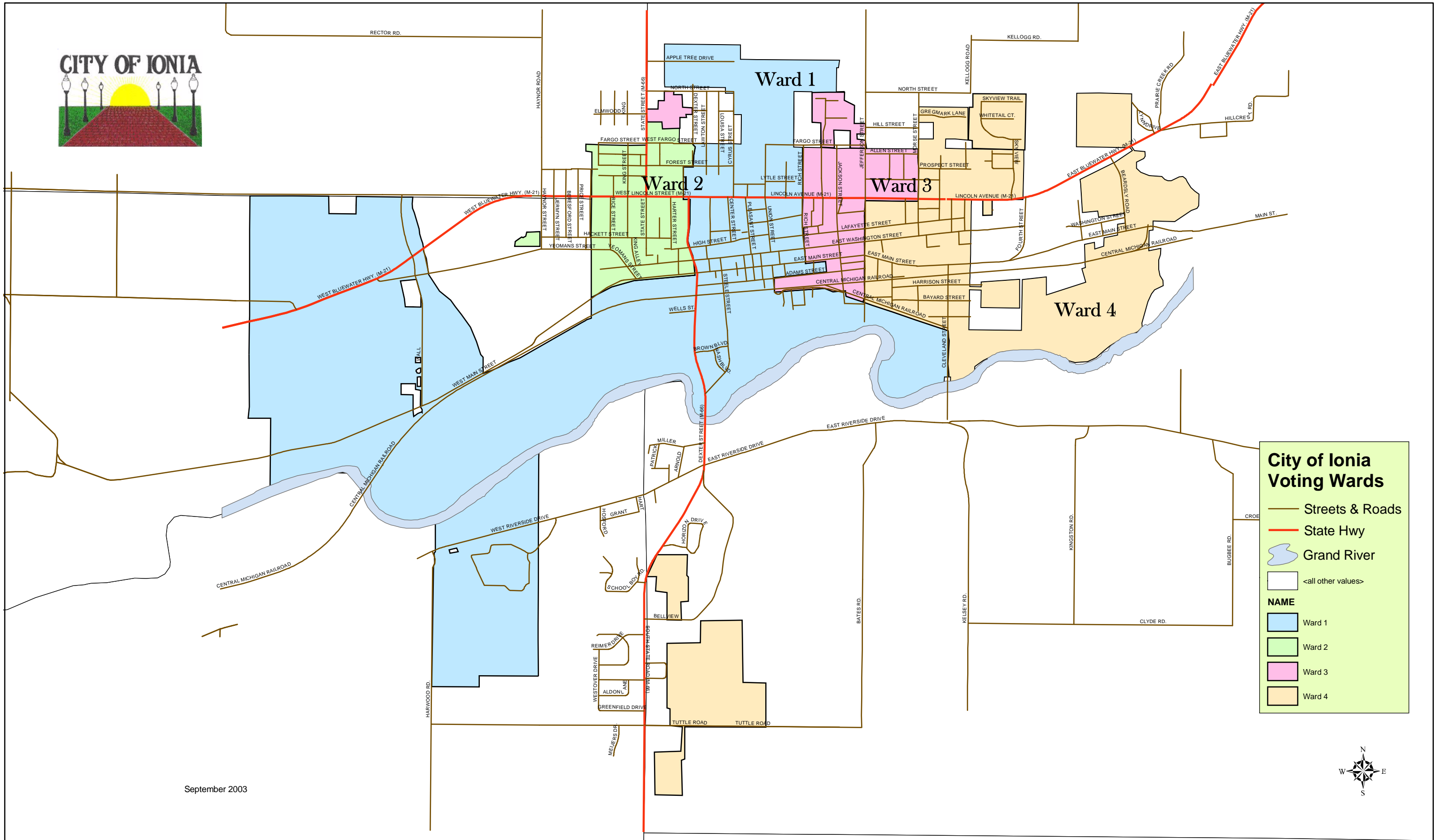
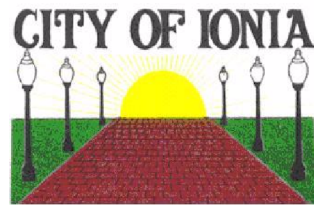
Addressing neighborhood issues by wards was a convenient way to structure the workshop process, but the political wards within the City do not necessarily function as single neighborhoods. Each ward may have a variety of issues facing different areas within each ward. At the same time, common themes emerged during the workshop sessions, and these themes have been grouped together as City-wide issues.

The information gathered from the workshop participants, as well as information gathered by the Planning Commission and the consultant during the scope of the planning process, have been used to create Goals and Actions, followed by a suggested list of agents that may be responsible for carrying out these actions. In addition on, the same information has been used to draft Specific Projects and Strategies for individual neighborhoods.

Probably the single most effective means of accomplishing the Goals and Actions for the City as a whole and Specific Projects for neighborhoods is to create neighborhood associations that meet regularly to address issues of concern, and who elect a liaison to City Hall.

The Historic Preservation Component of this Plan also suggests the creation of neighborhood associations. This plan assumes that these associations are one in the same for each neighborhood, and that all issues relevant to the neighborhood including historic preservation are discussed within the established neighborhood association.

Issues that are often voiced by residents include the concern over sidewalk and retaining wall repair and maintenance, as well as the desire to relocate both M-66 and M-21 around the City. Since these issues have been dealt with in the past, or are currently being dealt with, they are not included in the Goals and Actions section of this plan. Rather, an update on these issues follows:



**City of Ionia
Voting Wards**

— Streets & Roads
— State Hwy
— Grand River
— <all other values>

NAME

Ward 1
Ward 2
Ward 3
Ward 4



Sidewalks and Retaining Walls

Concern about sidewalk maintenance and repair was a commonly voiced issue at the neighborhood workshops. Currently, the City pays for one third of the repair of existing sidewalks while the property owner served by the sidewalk pays two thirds. Over the past several years, the City has been in the process of replacing or repairing all sidewalks within the City. Each pedestrian crossing point has been made accessible according to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Any future concerns regarding sidewalks should be addressed by the neighborhood associations recommended below.

Another issue that was frequently mentioned was the condition of retaining walls throughout the City. Several of these walls are indeed in need of repair or replacement. The City is in the process of seeking legal advice as to the responsibility for maintenance of these walls. As with the issue of sidewalks, each neighborhood association should address concerns about retaining walls.

M-66 and M-21 Corridors

Citizens in both the Community-wide Visioning Session and the Neighborhood Workshops expressed a desire to find alternative routes around the City for both M-66 and M-21. Past studies by the Michigan Department of Transportation have indicated that the rerouting of these Michigan highways is not likely in the near future. The rerouting of these highways would likely occur only if MDOT determines that the ability of these roadways to carry expected traffic volumes through the City limits is inadequate.

CITY-WIDE GOALS AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1: **Establish neighborhood associations that meet regularly to discuss issues relative to neighborhood appearance and character, maintenance of streets, curbs and sidewalks, code enforcement, pedestrian safety, and traffic concerns. In cases where adjoining Townships are functionally parts of neighborhoods, invite residents of those Townships to participate in neighborhood associations.**

Actions

- 1. City Manager with City Council approval, initiates formation of neighborhood associations.**

Agents: City Manager, City Council, interested citizens.

2. **Create a new City staff position of ombudsman/neighborhood organizer who will coordinate the concerns and issues of neighborhood associations with appropriate City departments or procedures.**

Agents: City Council, City Manager, representatives from neighborhood associations.

GOAL 2: Improve the appearance and upkeep of neighborhoods, in order to increase community pride and to discourage gang activity and vandalism.

Actions:

1. **Review existing City codes and ordinances to determine the extent to which already established City laws will require the maintenance of existing single and multi-unit dwellings; determine any roadblocks to enforcement of existing codes.**

Agents: City staff responsible for code enforcement, owners of multi-unit dwellings, City Manager, Planning Commission, neighborhood association.

2. **Determine revisions necessary to City codes and ordinances that will improve the ability of the City to require the desirable appearance and upkeep of residential structures, particularly where single family residences have been converted to multi-family uses.**

Agents: City staff responsible for code enforcement, City Manager, Planning Commission, planning consultant.

3. **Consider rezoning areas for single family residential uses where multi-family uses are seen to be in conflict with the desired neighborhood character.** Areas recommended for rezoning are discussed in Chapter 4 entitled Implementation.

Agents: Planning Commission, City Council, Planning Consultant.

GOAL 3: Initiate traffic calming measures or pedestrian safety measures in those areas where driver and/or pedestrian safety is of concern.

Actions

1. **Develop a list of priority areas where traffic calming devices and/or pedestrian safety devices would be of value.** In particular, those areas of concern are the intersections of Steele and Adams Streets, Jefferson Street and M-21, and Morse and M-21.

Agents: Department of Public works, Public Safety officials, Michigan Department of Transportation, neighborhood associations, public schools.

2. **Develop alternative designs for traffic calming and pedestrian safety devices in priority locations; develop a time-line and funding source for selected alternatives.**

Agents: Design Consultant, Department of Public Works, City Manager, City Council.

GOAL 4: Improve the appearance and function of the M-66 and Dexter Street Corridor within the Ionia City limits.

Actions

1. **Establish an M-66/Dexter Street Corridor Business Association that works to establish common goals relative to the appearance and function of the corridor within the limits of the City of Ionia and with attention to how the Corridor functions as “the gateway” to the community of Ionia.** Establish a regular meeting opportunity for these businesses to discuss issues such as conversion of residences to commercial uses, architectural standards, driveway spacing standards, and landscaping standards.

Agents: Chamber of Commerce, business and property owners along the M-66/Dexter Street Corridor, Free Fair Board, Michigan Department of Transportation, Design Consultant.

2. **Support initiatives by the Michigan Department of Transportation to offer design alternatives for the intersections of M-66 with M-21, to facilitate the safe movement of traffic and pedestrians within these corridors.**

Agents: Michigan Department of Transportation, M-66 Corridor Business Association, Ionia City Council.

GOAL 5: Maximize the potential of the Free Fair grounds as a community and regional facility.

Specific Goals, Actions, and Agents are listed within the Chapter entitled Free Fair Component.

NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECTS AND STRATEGIES

Many of the likes, dislikes, and desires voiced by participants at the neighborhood workshops were common themes expressed by residents of all neighborhoods. However, several issues were specific to that neighborhood only. Items that were identified by neighborhood workshop participants as “High Priority” are described below as Specific Projects, along with a strategy for accomplishing that project.

WARD ONE

Neighborhood Description and Issues

Ward One is located primarily west of Rich Street and east of Dexter Street in the central portion of the City, and extends further east and west in the northern and southern portions of the City. Ward One includes the Free Fair grounds, much of the flood plain extending to Cleveland Street, most of the M-66/Dexter Street Corridor, and some of the larger remaining vacant parcels in the City. The original, central business district is included within the boundaries of Ward One.

Issues that are most important to Ward One residents include:

1. Traffic along M-66 and M-21,
2. Traffic patterns on Union and Fargo Streets
3. Lack of building inspection for rental units
4. Animal control
5. Condition of sidewalks
6. Appearance of signs at the Free Fair grounds

Other items mentioned during the workshop session included missing or dangerous sidewalks, missing curbs, dangerous school intersections, and noise nuisances.

High priority desires for residents of Ward One include:

1. Establishing community gardens for low income or elderly persons
2. Establishing alternative routes for M-66 and M-21
3. Strictly enforcing codes for rental buildings and apartments

Other desires included items that relate to neighborhood appearance and pride, underground utilities, street lighting in residential areas, and development of a lake and camping area on the Free Fair grounds.

Specific Projects:

1. Community gardens. This is a project that would best be initiated by the neighborhood association. Vacant parcels of sufficient size could be identified by the association, and land owners contacted concerning their willingness to possibly rent out or donate use of the parcel for a community garden. Alternatively, the City of Ionia may be able to identify city-owned parcels that would be suitable for a community garden that may be utilized by residents of other wards as well.

2. Traffic patterns on Union and Fargo Streets. Residents are concerned about the posted speed limits on these streets which is 25 miles per hour.. Union Street is constructed on a steep grade, and serves the Ionia Middle School on the west side of the school. In addition, the intersection of Union Street with Fargo Street is a 90 degree turn, that may pose difficulties for trucks and school buses negotiating the turn. The neighborhood association should initiate discussions with school officials, public safety officials, and residents along these two streets to determine traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures as well as alternative routes for trucks that may be using these streets.

WARD TWO

Neighborhood Description and Issues

Ward Two is located on the western side of the City, with West Main Street as its southern boundary and North Street at its northern-most edge. Ward Two extend east to North Dexter Street, and contains significant portions of the M-66 and M-21 Corridors.

Much of Ward Two is adjacent to neighborhoods located in Easton Township. While these neighborhoods are technically within another political jurisdiction, they are functionally connected to the neighborhoods within the City of Ionia. Cooperation between these two communities will be essential to effectively accomplish mutual goals.

Issues that are important to Ward Two residents include:

1. The care of Oak Hill Cemetery
2. The conditions of structures and yards on West Washington Street
3. The use of River Side Park

Other items mentioned included the apartment-to-home ratio in the City, and the lack of enforcement of City rules.

High priority desires included:

1. A desire for more hours at the City yard waste disposal facility
2. More continuous clean-up of the City

3. City responsibility for sidewalk maintenance and repair

Specific Projects:

1. Care of Oak Hill Cemetery. Oak Hill Cemetery is located in the southwest portion of Ward Two, and has its entrance on Yeoman's Road. A representative from the neighborhood association can take the concerns of residents to the City Council, which can then determine a strategy, along with Public Works and Public Safety officials, for consistent maintenance and patrol of the cemetery.

Increased Hours at City Yard Waste Facility. While this is an issue expressed only by the residents of Ward Two, it really is a City-wide issue, and should be looked at in view of the needs of the City as a whole. However, members of the Ward Two neighborhood association could open a discussion with the City Manager and/or the City Council which then in turn may assess the needs of City residents for increased hours.

WARD THREE

Neighborhood Description and Issues

Ward Three is the most centrally located Ward in the City. The Central Michigan Railway is the southern boundary line, while Ridgewood Court is the northern-most street. Rich Street makes up most of the western boundary of Ward Three. and the eastern edge of the ward is at Morse Street.

1. Issues that are most important to residents of Ward Three are:
2. Lack of brush removal and street sweeping
3. Speeding on residential streets
4. Upkeep of rental properties

Other items mentioned were lack of sidewalks in some areas, noise from car stereos, poor creek maintenance, animal control, and burning of trash.

High priority desires include:

1. Extended City clean-up times
2. Control of ice and water build-up and other obstructions in the handicapper accessible curb
3. More cultural activities that appeal to all age groups.

Specific Projects:

1. City clean-up. Brush removal, street sweeping, and extended City-wide clean-up efforts were all important issues to residents of Ward Two. Members of the Ward Two neighborhood association can open a discussion of these issues with the City Manager, City Council, and Public Works officials. As with the issue of extended City Dump hours, the issue of clean-up may be a City-wide issue, and will need to be approached with the needs of the entire City in mind.

2. Speeding on Residential Streets. Neighborhood association members should compile a list of street segments where they have observed vehicles traveling at excessive speeds. This list could then be presented to public safety officials, who may be invited to attend a meeting of the neighborhood association. Additional patrol in problems areas may be an option. Temporary speed monitoring signs that alert drivers as to the speed they are traveling may be an effective technique along some stretches of roadways.

3. Ice and water in handicapper curb areas. Members of the neighborhood association can compile a list of those curb areas where water or ice build-up has been a problem. In addition, other concerns about barrier-free access expressed by the residents of Ward Three include lack of signs for handicapper accessibility, well marked parking areas, ramp obstructions such as tree limbs, and raised sidewalks. A liaison to City Hall can contact the Public Works either directly or through the City Manager or City Council to see if remedies for these problem are possible.

WARD FOUR

Neighborhood Description and Issues

Ward Four is composed of all remaining lands in the City to the east of Ward three. It encompasses a combination of older neighborhoods as well as newer neighborhoods characterized by larger lots. The western side of Ward Four contains larger undeveloped parcels, as well as large portions of the flood plains of both the Grand River and Prairie Creek. Ward Four surrounds a large portion of Ionia Township on three sides.

Issues most important to residents of Ward Four include;

1. The deep ditch on North Johnson Street
2. Retaining wall repair
3. Access to City authorities
4. Trucks routes
5. Historic homes

6. Yard and property upkeep

7. Supervision at Fun Forest

Other items mentioned were animal control, blind corner at Morse and Lincoln, traffic speeds, sidewalks, neighborhood/rental units upkeep, street trees, and parks patrol. (This group did not have time to prioritize desires.)

Specific Projects:

1. Ditch on North Johnson Street. An area located just north of M-21 at North Johnson Street needs to be drained and filled to match the surrounding grade. Parking in this area is potentially hazardous. Neighbors should work with Department of Public Works officials to ensure attention to this issue.

2. Parks patrol, particularly at Fun Forest. Neighborhood association members may compile a list of parks where vandalism or nuisances occur regularly, and submit this list, along with the type of incident, to City council members. Along with Public Safety officials, increased patrol may be provided in areas determined to be of concern.

3. Truck routes. Truck routes are a City-wide issue, however, the input of residents within each neighborhood will be recommended as part of the strategy for establishing a new truck route. A recommendation for a new truck route has been included in the Business and Industry Component of this plan.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMPONENT

One of the most consistently identified strong points of the City of Ionia is the existence of many historically significant structures. These structures lend an identity to the City, contribute to the quality of life, and provide an opportunity to market the City in a variety of ways. Various efforts over the years have contributed to preserving historic structures and areas within the City. However, many opportunities still exist to enhance and improve upon these efforts. Following is a summary of the present and current historic preservation efforts within the City, as well as recommended actions that will assist the preservation efforts currently underway in the City.

Existing Historic Preservation Districts

The City currently has two formally registered historic districts, which were established in 1977 and 1978. The boundaries of these districts are shown on maps at the end of this Chapter. In addition, several structures within the City have qualified to be recognized with a plaque placing the structure on the National or State Register for Historic Properties. These structures include the Ionia County Courthouse, the City of Ionia Library, the Governor Green Mansion, Ionia First Christian Church, St. John's Episcopal Church and Parish House, the Vosper House, the VanderHayden House, and several private residences.

The first registered historic district is a residential area that is primarily north and east of the downtown, and includes such notable structures as the Library and the Governor Green Mansion. Efforts for encouraging preservation in this residential historic district have included workshops sponsored by the City of Ionia with presenters from the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office.

Beyond the boundaries of the current residential historic district, efforts have been made to improve and maintain historic homes along West Washington Street and Adams Street. These homes, many of which have been converted to multi-family dwellings, were eligible for City sponsored programs that supply paint, repair, landscaping, plumbing, and electrical services to moderate or low income homeowners.

The second registered historic district consists of the original downtown commercial area, and includes structures such as the Ionia Armory, the County Court House, and the Ionia Theater. Efforts to help preserve the downtown historic district have included several local and State programs, the most recent being an Enhancement Grant received in 2000 that provides for pavement removal, resurfacing of approaches and intersections, preparation and bricking of streets, improvements in water and storm sewer infrastructure, and partial curb, gutter, and sidewalk repair. To date, bricking of Main Street has occurred from Kidd Street to Stephenson Place east of the downtown. In the spring of 2001, bricking along Main Street will proceed east from M-66 to Kidd Street, completing the three-phase Main Street project.

A document completed in 1992 inventoried every business on Main Street as well as businesses on ancillary streets. The purpose of this document was to justify the downtown location for a

proposed hotel. The document includes color photographs of each building front, and includes recommendations for improving the use and appearance of each building.

Citizens Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation

In June of 1995, the City of Ionia organized a volunteer committee concerned with Historic Preservation. This committee received formal recognition from the Ionia City Council in August of 1995. The primary purpose of this Citizens Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation is to assemble recommendations to City Council for the expansion of the historic district boundaries, and to provide recommendations concerning other historic preservation activities.

The primary impetus for formation of this Committee was the demolition in 1994 of the former Ypsilanti Reed Furniture Company Building. GenCorp Automotive, which owned the building located at 119 South Dexter Street, had requested Community Development Block Grant funds for a demolition and redevelopment project. In order to mediate the impact of demolition on a historically significant structure, a complete Historic American Engineering Record was required (through a Memorandum of Agreement) prior to demolition with the use of public moneys.

The Citizens Advisory Committee works closely with the Michigan Bureau of History and State Historic Preservation Office as they currently undertake the task of recordation of properties within the areas and neighborhoods that may eventually be included in the expanded historic districts. In addition, the Committee has sponsored public hearings, encouraged newspaper coverage of historic preservation activities, and has published articles in the Ionia City Newsletter.

Future Goals and Actions

Recommended Goals and Actions for continued success in historic preservation in the City of Ionia are based upon discussions with City of Ionia staff responsible for assisting the Citizens Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation, as well as recommendations of the consultant team.

Rationale for these Goals is based upon several determinations. These are: a) the success of historic preservation efforts in the City of Ionia depends greatly upon the communication and coordination of efforts among many groups and individuals; b) the physical maintenance of historically significant structures will depend upon public awareness and voluntary commitment to historic preservation rather than historic preservation ordinances; c) the community as a whole will desire to improve the appearance and upkeep of deteriorating neighborhoods that contain structures of historical significance; d) future expansion of the City may in certain areas be designed to continue the original character of the City; and e) the historically significant areas and structures will provide the City with one of its strongest marketing tools.

The Goals described below are followed by Action steps; the agents that are seen as best able to carry out these Action steps are listed following the Actions. As these Actions are carried out, adjustments and revisions to the Goals, Actions, and Agents will likely be made.

GOALS AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Increase communication among groups or individuals whose actions impact the preservation and maintenance of historic structures and places within the City of Ionia.

Actions

1. Identify groups or individuals whose actions impact historic preservation efforts within the City. Examples of groups or individuals include: Citizens Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Authority, City Planning Commissioners, City Council, Mayor, City Manager, Zoning Administrator, City Staff, Building Authority, Housing Commission, Free Fair Board, homeowners, owners of rental properties, commercial building owners, local media, public utilities, building contractors, and others which may be identified over time.

Agents: Citizens Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation, assisted by City staff.

2. Establish regular opportunities for communication and information exchange among those groups and individuals described above. Opportunities for communication may include a regular article in the City newsletter, a separate newsletter for historic preservation issues, and regular historic preservation agenda items for groups that meet on a regular basis such as neighborhood associations and the City Council. In addition, the Citizens Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation should arrange to meet on a periodic basis with those groups identified in number one above.

Agents: Citizens Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation, assisted by City staff. Other groups or individuals, such as the DDA, the Chamber of Commerce, and the City Manager should over time take a stronger role in initiating communication and information exchange regarding historic preservation issues within their own organization or among organizations.

GOAL 2: Maintain, repair, and remodel historic structures in keeping with guidelines established by state and federal agencies responsible for historic preservation.

Actions

1. Hold workshops at regular intervals for owners of homes (including rental properties) and commercial buildings as well as for building contractors that provide information on historically accurate styles and materials for repair and remodeling of historically significant structures.

Agents: Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, Citizens Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, Downtown Development Authority, Building Authority, Housing Commission.

2. Establish an Architectural Review Board to act in an advisory capacity prior to demolition, remodeling, or repair and maintenance of buildings within existing and future historic districts. Require the input of this Board prior to issuing of permits for building, demolition, or site changes. Offer the services of this Board to homeowners considering maintenance or repair projects which do not necessarily require a permit. Duties of this board may also include statements of impact on site changes to historically significant areas, including tree removal, landscaping, and alterations to retaining walls.

Agents: Representation from the following groups: The Citizens Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation, the DDA, City staff responsible for building inspection and code enforcement, and possibly the Housing Commission.

3. Obtain and review sample Historic Preservation Ordinances that are successfully utilized in cities similar to Ionia. Establish communication with cities that have successful historic preservation programs. Consider integrating portions of historic preservation ordinances into the Architectural Review Board process, and consider eventual adoption of an historic preservation ordinance if and when community sentiment warrants such adoption.

Agents: Citizens Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation, City staff, and the Planning Commission.

GOAL 3: Maintain and improve upon the general appearance and upkeep of commercial areas and residential neighborhoods where historic structures or areas exist.

Actions

1. Develop a complaint form that will be available to the public, and will include review of the complaint by designated City personnel. Establish a system to encourage compliance with established standards for maintenance of historically significant structures and areas.

Agents: City staff responsible for code enforcement, City staff responsible for Historic Preservation.

2. Review existing City codes and ordinances to determine the extent to which already established City laws will advance the upkeep and appearance of the historic commercial area as well as neighborhoods of historical significance.

Agents: City staff responsible for code enforcement, representatives from the Citizens Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation, members of the Planning Commission.

3. Determine any roadblocks to enforcement of existing Codes and ordinances.

Agents: City Manager, City staff responsible for code enforcement, Downtown Development Authority.

4. Determine revisions necessary to City codes and ordinances that will improve the ability of the City to enforce upkeep and appearance of both the historic commercial area and historic neighborhoods. Establish a schedule of regular inspections of historically significant commercial and industrial structures. Items to be included in inspections may be expanded to include broken and dirty windows, deteriorating walls, condition of paint, condition of signs, and condition of sidewalks.

Agents: City staff responsible for Historic Preservation, City staff responsible for code enforcement, City Manager, City Council.

5. Establish neighborhood associations within existing and future historic districts that meet regularly to discuss issues relative to neighborhood pride, and that serve as liaisons to City Hall and to the Citizens Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation.

Agents: City Manager, interested citizens

GOAL 4: Eliminate or reduce the numbers of multi-family units within neighborhoods originally designed for single-family homes; review parking availability in those areas where historic structures are currently used as multi-family dwellings.

Actions

1. Revise Zoning Ordinance regulations to prohibit multi-family dwellings within areas of the City where the historical significance of structures is negatively impacted by conversions to multi-family use.

Agents: Planning Commission in conjunction with private consultant, and members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation.

2. Review parking regulations in areas where parking is determined to be a problem, or where the parking pattern detracts from the historic character of an area. Determine changes to parking regulations that will improve the function and character of an area. Examples of such areas are found along West Washington and Rich Streets.

Agents: Public safety officials in conjunction with neighborhood associations or representatives, and members of the DDA.

3. Develop design criteria which will assist in adapting older areas of the City to the vehicle needs of today's residents. In particular, the issues of safety on narrow streets should be addressed.

Agents: Consultant team, public safety officials, Planning Commission.

GOAL 5: Plan for areas of the City that, when expanded or redeveloped, will retain the character and scale of the historic areas of the City.

Actions

1. Designate areas in the northwest portion of the City, particularly in that area along the M-66 corridor, that are planned to accommodate homes on lots similar in character to those within the older, original areas of the City. Establish design criteria which will facilitate the function of these neo-traditional areas, such as neighborhood parks, pedestrian links, alleys, appropriate architecture, neighborhood commercial areas, and street trees.

Agents: Design consultant, Planning Commission.

GOAL 6: Integrate historic features of the City within an overall marketing campaign to enhance tourism and economic vitality.

Actions

1. Develop and distribute a brochure that specifically details the historic areas and structures of the City. Include in the brochure a map of a walking tour that will take in the most prominent features of the City's history.

Agents: Citizen's Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation, Chamber of Commerce, private advertising firm.

2. Consider establishing a yearly event that will focus on the historic attributes of the City. This event might be an historic homes tour, and might be tied to some other event in the City such as a holiday or the Free Fair. Examples of cities that have successfully accomplished this are Manistee, Marshall, and Grand Rapids (Michigan).

Agents: Citizen's Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Authority, Free Fair Board.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT

The Downtown Development Authority of the City of Ionia is composed of 12 members, including the City Manager and the Mayor of Ionia. The Ionia DDA was originally organized in 1981. After a period of inactivity, the DDA reorganized in 1989. At this time, a Tax Increment Financing plan (TIF) was added to the DDA to generate additional income for improvements. In addition, the boundaries of the DDA were greatly expanded beyond the original central business district. The boundaries of the current DDA district are shown on the map at the end of this Chapter.

The Ionia DDA has initiated numerous projects. (A list of those projects is included at the end of this section.) In May of 2000, the members of the DDA met with members of the Master Plan consultant team to review current and future projects, and to set priorities to be included in the Master Plan/Action Plan for the City. Goals, Actions, and Agents have been developed based upon the priorities selected by the DDA, the items identified as high priority by citizens who attended the Community-wide Visioning Session that took place on March 23, 2000, as well as recommendations of the consultant team.

The Ionia Free Fair grounds are located within the boundaries of the DDA. This Master Plan contains a section devoted entirely to the Free Fair grounds, however, the Free Fair is discussed (in less detail) within this section of the Plan, since issues with the Free Fair interface directly with the stated goals of the DDA.

The Goals within the DDA Component are listed below in order of priority as identified by the DDA.

GOALS AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Improve the appearance of facades and the backs of buildings within the central business district in order to assist in revitalizing the downtown area, so that retail and service opportunities will remain and expand within the central business district.

Actions

1. Identify those buildings in the downtown area that are of the highest priority in terms of their negative impact upon the vitality of that area, particularly due to the condition of the street-side facades.

Agents: DDA, Historic Preservation Committee, Chamber of Commerce, City Council.

2. Identify architectural styles that will complement the existing character of the downtown area. Consider contemporary styles that may blend with existing historic architecture. Require that improvements to downtown structures be reviewed by an

architectural committee comprised of members of the agents listed below. Consider tying the building permit process to review by this architectural committee.

Agents: Architect, DDA, Historic Preservation Committee, City staff responsible for permits and inspections, local merchants.

3. Establish a unified design scheme for the backs of buildings that face onto Main Street, particularly those buildings on the north side of Adams Street and in the vicinity of the Farmers' Market. (See design concept for this area at end of DDA section.)

Agents: Design consultant, DDA, City Council, local merchants.

4. Contact property owners of those structures that have been identified in Action Step 1 above; encourage voluntary compliance with efforts to improve the appearance and conditions of facades.

Agents: DDA, property owners.

5. Establish funding mechanisms for improvements to both facades and backs of buildings. These mechanisms could include a low-interest loan program, private sponsors tax incentives and investors, and grants aimed at downtown revitalization.

Agents: DDA, local financial institutions, local business, City staff responsible for grants administration.

GOAL 2: Establish an improvements schedule for the Dexter Street corridor that addresses access standards, landscaping, signs, sidewalks, parking, and building facades, in order to enhance the overall image of the City to motorists traveling the M-66 corridor, and to enhance opportunities for those businesses along Dexter Street. (See design concept for this area at end of DDA section.)

Actions

1. Devise an access management plan that addresses driveway spacing and design standards, parking area standards, pedestrian access. Require compliance with the access management plan whenever site plan review is required for new or expanding businesses. Encourage voluntary compliance with the plan in all other cases.

Agents: Planning consultant, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Planning Commission.

2. Design a streetscape that will unify the Dexter Street Corridor and will address issues such as landscaping, signs (both directional and business), fixtures, and appearance of facades. Require compliance with the streetscape plan whenever site plan review is required for new or expanding businesses. Encourage voluntary compliance in all other cases.

Agents: Design consultant, landscape architect, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Planning Commission.

3. Establish a Dexter Street Corridor merchants association that focuses on issues particular to the corridor such as unified appearance, traffic circulation, image projection, and marketing strategy.

Agents: Dexter Street corridor merchants and property owners, representation from the DDA, Chamber of Commerce.

GOAL 3: Expand non-fair uses at the Fair grounds, in order to ensure the continued success and longevity of the Free Fair and to enhance the overall image of the City.

Actions

1. Cooperate with the Free Fair Board, the City Council, and the Chamber of Commerce in supporting the Goals within the Free Fair Component of the Master Plan/Action Plan.

Agents: Free Fair Board, Chamber of Commerce, City Council, representation from the DDA.

GOAL 4: Develop a uniform system of attractive signs throughout the central business district that gives clear direction to City landmarks, shopping, business, governmental, recreational, and parking areas. In addition, review regulations for signs in the business districts to determine if those regulations support marketing efforts in those districts.

Actions

1. Identify those areas for which directional and location signs are desired, as well as the probable placement of those signs. Take into account the locations that function as gateways to the City, such as the Dexter Street Corridor, portions of M-21, Steele Street, Main Street, and others which may be identified.

Agents: Historic Committee, Parks and Recreation staff, City Manager, Ionia County Personnel, Hospital Personnel, DDA, both downtown and Dexter Street merchants.

2. Select designs that are easily readable to the motoring public, and that complement the character of the City.

Agents: Sign company, design consultant, DDA, Chamber of Commerce, City Council, Historic Committee.

3. Review the existing sign ordinance to determine if existing sign regulations are productive in regard to marketing efforts in both the downtown and Dexter Street business areas. Consider those regulations or lack of regulations which allow signs that detract from the desired character in business areas. In addition, consider amending regulations to allow additional types of signs such as portable sidewalk signs and small scale horizontal projecting signs that are complimentary to the streetscape.

Agents: Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, DDA, downtown and Dexter Street merchants.

GOAL 5: Improve the function and appearance of those parking areas that are determined to be essential to the success of the Central business district.

Actions

1. Identify parking areas within the central business district that are essential in serving the needs of those using downtown businesses and governmental services.

Agents: DDA, merchants, governmental personnel.

2. Provide signs that clearly direct the motoring public to parking areas that serve downtown businesses and services.

Agents: DDA, merchants, City Council.

3. Provide clearly marked walkways between parking areas and downtown businesses and services. Consider the further use of alleys or arcades between buildings to link parking areas behind buildings with store fronts. Provide signs directing pedestrians from parking areas to store fronts or to the rear entrances of stores.

Agents: DDA, Planning Commission, planning consultant.

4. Establish landscaping and access guidelines for parking areas and walkways that enhance the aesthetics of the overall central business district.

Agents: City Council, Planning Commission, planning consultant.

GOAL 6: Design a wetlands trail (boardwalk) that will link wetlands adjacent to “The Point” with other wetlands to the east. Provide connections from this trail to the proposed River Trail, the downtown area, and points of scenic interest such as the view northward to the Ionia County Courthouse from the intersection of Adams Street with Hudson Street. (See Map 10.)

Actions

1. Prepare a wetlands trail plan as an amendment to the Recreation Plan, or as a joint project between the Recreation Department and the DDA.

Agents: Recreation Department staff, City Council, DDA, design consultant.

2. Determine funding sources for design and construction of the wetlands trail such as Department of Natural Resources grant, DDA funds, private donations, or general funds.

Agents: City Council, Recreation Department staff, DDA.

GOAL 7: Capitalize on the topography and breathtaking views in the City by providing public scenic viewing points.

Actions

1. Identify those areas that provide significant views of the City. Examples are: the view south from Union Street at Summit Street, just in front of the Middle School, which affords a breathtaking view of the County Court house and the valley below; the view from the High and Pleasant Street intersection; and the view northward of the County Courthouse from the intersection of Adams Street with Hudson Street. **(See Map 10.)**

Agents: Planning Commission, planning or design consultant, Recreation Department staff.

2. Designate scenic overlooks within the City as pocket parks, as portions of a trail system, or as conservation easements across privately owned property. Work with nearby residents who will be affected by increased pedestrian or vehicle traffic.

Agents: Planning Commission, City Council, Recreation Department staff, planning consultant.

3. Establish funding for acquiring, designing, and upkeep of the scenic overlooks. Consider general funds, private donations of funds and/or time, and recreation grants.

Agents: Planning Commission, City Council, Recreation Department staff, garden club, other interested civic groups.

COMPLETED DDA PROJECTS

1. All parking lots were resurfaced (along Adams Street).
2. Facade improvements through low-interest loans, grants, and purchase. Our loan program continues.
3. Decoration of lamp post during seasonal occasions.
4. Plantings of flowers in the Central Business District as well as other areas of the DDA.
5. Clean-up in and around the stores that includes snow removal as well as sweeping.
6. Marketing brochures and other data has been assembled and is being improved.
7. All roadways in the DDA have been upgraded and resurfaced.
8. Decorative street lighting was first installed along Adams and Steele Streets. It is now being expanded to M-66 (Dexter Street), M-21 (between State and Baldie Street), State Street (to north city limits), Cleveland, Beardsley, Adams (from Hudson to Jackson Street), and Washington Street. Future lighting will be installed on new roads across “the point” as well as GenCorp drive.
9. Signage in and around the DDA is being improved.
10. Ongoing maintenance such as painting of lines in lots and on the street, patching, sidewalk leveling, tree trimming, mowing, and other items is paid for by the DDA.
11. Public Safety has been improved by addition of officers in the downtown.
12. Purchase and removal of buildings on the point and along Dexter street that had become eyesores. The main removal thus far was the old “Todd and Ross” gas station that had 28 tanks buried around it. It is today the home of Ionia Burger King. Other buildings to be removed and improved include the Seymour Tire/Snack Shack; the Motorcycle Shop/Chicken Chalet; and buildings on the point. Others include substandard houses in and around the DDA district (Railside area).
13. Filling of the point which will house a Credit Union, Bank, Hotel, and restaurant when complete. Also, it assists with the expansion of Brown Corporation of Ionia.
14. Restoration of the depot. This was purchased by the DDA but restored privately.
15. Redevelopment of the GenCorp facility, a 40 acre redevelopment that is in progress. It has included removal of A and B buildings, purchase of homes around the plant,

renovation of utilities, construction of a new road, and eventual construction of a new office center and expanded manufacturing plant.

16. Complete sidewalk replacement throughout the DDA area.
17. Renovation of the Ionia Theatre.
18. Improvement of the downtown streetscape including Dexter and Steele Streets.
19. Relocation of public safety in a new/improved building on Adams Street.
20. Creation of a light industrial park (not yet done). However, Railside was created south of the tracks.
21. Development/redevelopment of the Ionia Fairgrounds with buildings and grandstand restored. A riverwalk is planned for 1996.
22. Dexter Street corridor improvements - including demolition of buildings, new walks, better lighting and other improvements.
23. Development of the end of Harrison Street and Cleveland Street dump.
24. Residential housing improvements downtown.
25. Lighting improvements district wide.
26. Landscaping improvements at Central Park and other areas.
27. Development of a hotel.
28. Addition of the second screen at Ionia Theatre.
29. Farmer's Market in the downtown area (to be at Central Park).
30. Utility undergrounding throughout the DDA as well as other improvements to storm, water, and sewer systems.
31. Removal of the Perrone Building, rehab and eventual removal of the Hood-Stout building as well as removal of homes near American Bumper for future expansion and growth.
32. Renovation of the Coney Island Building.
33. Renovation of Cornell Alley that allowed for a new east-west alley, the expansion of Clothing Care Center of Ionia as well as a new parking lot for the 400 block of Main Street.

-
34. Eventual creation of a pedestrian bridge at the fairgrounds for improvement of parking as well as the rivertrail access.

Legend

-

FREE FAIR COMPONENT

The Ionia Free Fair figures strongly in the past and future of the City of Ionia. The Fair is the largest free fair in the world, and has been in existence since 1914. Attendance across the ten-day run of the Fair can reach 500,000 people. Attractions include big-name entertainers, agricultural and home arts exhibits, commercial displays, carnival rides, games, and concessions. Camping is available on the Fair grounds both during the fair and at all other times during the camping season. Riverside Park, a City park which is maintained by the Free Fair, and City Department of Public Works is located in the Fairgrounds along the Grand River.

In addition, many other non-fair opportunities are provided on the Free Fair grounds. These opportunities include rental of the various buildings for conventions and receptions, storage of vehicles, horse shows, and antique shows.

The Ionia Free Fair is administered by the Free Fair Board, composed of citizens. The Board oversees maintenance and programming of the Fairgrounds, hires all staff, and sets policies for the Fair. A full-time manager is currently retained by the Fair Board.

The Free Fair utilizes an area of approximately 80 acres, located on the City's south side, on the west side of Dexter Street (M-66). Another 100 acres are utilized for parking and camping. While the City of Ionia owns most of the property on which the Fair is located, the Free Fair owns all of the buildings and structures. There is some question as to the ownership of portions of the property on which the Fair buildings sit; this is an issue that could be addressed through a legal title search.

A concern that has grown over the past several years is that of increasing competition for entertainment in nearby urban areas such as Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Mount Pleasant. In particular, this affects the availability and success of the musical groups that are brought in to perform in the Grandstand. In addition, the financial success of the Fair hinges greatly upon the weather. Poor attendance in one season due to inclement weather is financially devastating. Therefore, the Fair Board is considering ways to increase income during the non-fair season, especially during the winter months.

A Strategic Planning Committee, composed of several members of the Free Fair Board, works to set long range goals for the Fair and Fair grounds. The goals of the Strategic Planning Committee, along with input from the Downtown Development Association, the citizens of Ionia, and the planning consultant have been considered in drafting Goals, Strategies and Actions for the Master Plan.

The Goals, Actions, and Agents listed below are not simply a restatement of the already existing goals of the Free Fair Board. Rather, these goals are those that, if further developed, expanded upon, or more aggressively advanced, will benefit the vitality of the City of Ionia as a whole in addition to the operation of the Free Fair itself.

GOALS AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Expand the uses of the Free Fair grounds to generate additional non-fair income, in order to assure the continued successful operation of the Free Fair.

Actions

1. Conduct a complete legal title search of all properties and structures that occupy the Fair grounds and possibly adjacent properties.

Agents: Legal counsel, title office, City Council, Free Fair Board.

2. With the assistance of a marketing professional, determine the possible groups or agencies that would likely utilize the Fair facilities for conventions or other special events. Consider groups that would use existing facilities as well as groups that would use improvements to the grounds such as a new building.

Agents: Free Fair Board, DDA, Chamber of Commerce, marketing consultant.

3. Depending upon the outcome of the study recommended above, investigate possible construction of an additional building on the Fair grounds that is capable of accommodating convention groups or other groups that will generate additional income for Free Fair operations and improvement. The investigation will explore possible financing options for this building, including public and private partners.

Agents: Free Fair Board, DDA, local lenders, private sponsors.

GOAL 2: Market the Free Fair facilities for uses other than the Fair itself. Consider the image that could best enhance opportunities for increases in group or special event use of the facility.

Actions

1. In a joint meeting of the Free Fair Board, the Chamber of Commerce, and the DDA determine the steps that have already been taken to market the Free Fair facilities. Determine desired additional strategies to enhance the image and expand use of the Fair facilities.

Agents: Free Fair Board or Strategic Planning Committee, Fair manager, Chamber of Commerce, DDA.

2. Employ a marketing professional to assist in establishing the desired image of the Fair facilities; consider a possible name change for the convention and special event component of the Fair facilities operation.

Agents: Free Fair Board, Fair manager, Chamber of Commerce, marketing consultant.

GOAL 3: Establish joint planning sessions between the Free Fair Board and the City of Ionia to plan, implement, and evaluate activities which will impact both the Fair operation and the City.

Actions

1. Establish a regular meeting schedule (monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly) between members of the Free Fair and either the entire City Council or a subcommittee of the Council to discuss issues that impact both the Fair operations and the City. Examples of these issues are: the proposed gravel mining and creation of Dunsmore Lake area; improvements and activities at Riverside Park; the development of the River Trail; improved camping facilities; and planning for additional convention and meeting facilities.

Agents: Free Fair Board, Ionia City Council.

INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT COMPONENT

Industry ranks highly among the City of Ionia's major employers. According to recent statistics, the manufacturing industries employ approximately 2,481 persons. The major employers within the City of Ionia are listed in Table 5; those employers in the industrial sector are listed in bold. The City of Ionia has a diversity of employment opportunities; this chapter will focus in particular upon the needs and opportunities facing industry in the City.

On August 21 of 2000, the planning consultant from MainStreet Planning Company met with a group of nine individuals representing industry and economic development in the City. These individuals generated lists of Strengths, Threats and Desires relative to industrial land use and development within the City. These comments, along with input from the Ionia County Economic Alliance and from the planning consultant, have been used to generate Goals and Actions for meeting the challenges of industrial development facing the City. These Goals and Actions are followed by a suggested list of Agents that may be responsible for carrying out these Actions.

Strengths identified by industrial representatives include Ionia's central location, employee longevity, the low cost of living in Ionia, employee training opportunities offered in the area, City cooperation with industry, adequate capacity of the Waste Water Treatment Facility, and the presence of an attractive industrial park (Orchard View) within the City limits.

Several threats were identified by representatives. These included a labor shortage, lack of affordable housing, a lack of available, serviced, industrially zoned lands, a lack of speculative buildings for start-up industries, and various traffic concerns primarily related to State of Michigan highways M-66 and M-21.

The high priority desires of the industrial community are focused exclusively on truck traffic concerns within the City. This issue is the result of industry being primarily scattered in various locations throughout the City, rather than just within one industrial park. Orchard View Industrial Park is located at the northern boundary of the City, on the east side of M-66. At the time of publication of this plan, just three companies had located there. Trucks serving these three companies must navigate through the City on their way to and from the I-96 interchange located south of the City.

Truck traffic accessing other markets in the Cities of Belding and Greenville to the north may utilize M-66 through Ionia as well. Of particular concern are the inadequate curve radii that exist where M-66 intersects with M-21. Currently, Michigan Department of Transportation is studying these intersections and may recommend design changes that will better facilitate truck movement.

In addition, trucks moving between the two Meridian automotive plants must use a truck route that utilizes streets in residential areas. In summary, truck movement through the City occurs for a variety of reasons, and is not a desirable situation.

Description of Industrial Land Use

Industrial land uses are found in various locations around the City. Meridian Automotive Systems, the largest industrial employer, has two operations locations in the City. The first location is on the east side of the City, on the south side of M-21 at Beardsley Road. The second location is on the west side of the City, north of the Central Michigan Railroad, at the western end of Adams Street extended. Brown Corporation, the second largest industrial employer, is located on the east side of Steele Street south of the Central Michigan Railroad. Both Volcor Finishing and Orion Manufacturing are located within Orchard View Industrial Park at the northern limits of the City. Another major employer, Integral Engineering and Manufacturing Corporation (IEM) is located on East Main Street west of Beardsley.

Within the City, approximately 39 acres of vacant, industrially zoned land remain. (This figure does not represent the industrially zoned lands located within the 100 Year Flood Plain, since much of this land is not actually usable for industrial purposes.) Twenty of these acres are located within the Orchard View Industrial Park. Another 16 acres are located adjacent to industrial land uses associated with Meridian Automotive Systems, Inc. located on the east side of the City. Approximately three acres of vacant industrially zoned land are located at the southwest corner of where Mill Street intersects the Grand Trunk Railroad.

Some potential for further industrial development may exist within neighboring Townships on vacant lands adjacent to already zoned industrial lands within the City boundaries, or on vacant parcels beyond City boundaries. Industrial development in these areas could possibly proceed with an agreement to purchase utility services from the City or under a PA 425 agreement, where a temporary transfer of property from a township to the City can be undertaken for economic development purposes. This idea is developed further within the Goals and Actions section below.

Local Development Finance Authority

The City of Ionia established an LDFA in 1993. Its membership consists of nine members representing industry, education, and the City of Ionia.

The purpose of an LDFA is to promote economic development through job creation. An LDFA may utilize tax increment financing to fund public facility construction and improvements necessary to attract and support manufacturing, agricultural processing, and high technology industries. An LDFA may also accept contributions; may own, lease, and operate buildings and property; may issue tax-exempt tax increment financing bonds; and may borrow money and issue revenue bonds.

The boundaries of the LDFA in the City of Ionia encompass Orchard View Industrial Park located at the northern limits of the City. This area is under the City's jurisdiction under an Act 425 Agreement, an act entitled Transfers of Property for Economic Development Projects. The LDFA captures funds by means of a Tax Increment Financing Authority established within the

L DFA. Initial funding for infrastructure within the industrial park was acquired as a loan from the City’s Waste Water and Sewage Disposal Fund, as well as grants.

GOALS AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Establish a new truck route through the City that minimizes impacts on residential neighborhoods, and that provides an efficient and safe route for those trucks utilizing the route.

Actions

1. Identify the transportation needs of local industry; and establish a truck route through the City that satisfies that need in a safe and efficient manner.

Agents: Traffic consultant along with representatives from local industry, truck drivers, public safety officials, the City Council, MDOT, and representatives from neighborhood associations.

2. Place attractive yet highly visible signs at key locations within the City to guide truck drivers and to alert both residents and visitors to the City of the truck route.

Agents: Traffic consultant, City Council, public safety officials, MDOT, representatives of neighborhood associations.

GOAL 2: Locate a serviced industrial park of at least 40 acres in size within close proximity to the City of Ionia.

Actions

1. Identify potential sites for the industrial park. The site will be potentially served by adequate roads and utilities.

Agents: L DFA, City of Ionia officials along with officials of adjacent Townships, City of Ionia Department of Public Works, private landowners, private investors.

2. Determine the benefit of an intergovernmental agreement in establishing an industrial park on lands near or adjacent to the City of Ionia.

3. Pursue a Public Act 425 Agreement (Transfer of Property for Economic Development Projects) or another intergovernmental agreement with surrounding townships that may allow for the provisions of services such as water and sewer to areas beyond City boundaries. (Note: Lands for which an intergovernmental agreement is drafted do not need to be contiguous at the boundaries of the municipalities involved.)

Agents: City Council, City Manager, Township elected and appointed officials.

GOAL 3: Pursue construction of an industrial speculative building of approximately 10,000 square feet in size with expansion possibilities, located within a fully serviced industrial park and within close proximity to the City of Ionia.

Actions

1. Identify public and private sources of funds to construct a speculative industrial building; investigate the purchase or donation of land for construction of this building in a suitable location that can be served by utilities and adequate roads.

Agents: Local Development Finance Authority, Ionia County Economic Alliance, representatives from townships adjacent to the City of Ionia, potential private donors and investors, Chamber of Commerce

2. Identify potential users of the speculative building; proceed with marketing efforts to attract users.

Agents: Ionia County Economic Alliance, Local Development Finance Authority, industrial marketing consultant, Chamber of Commerce

GOAL 4: Pursue investigation of establishing an incubator facility within the City of Ionia.

Actions

1. Invite representative from the City of Hastings to present information on the process of establishing an incubator facility in the City of Hastings. Assess the practicality of pursuing establishing an incubator within the City.

Agents: Local Development Finance Authority, Ionia Economic Alliance, Chamber of Commerce, potential investors.

GOAL 5: Identify housing needs within the Ionia area; encourage the construction of homes within a defined price range (approximately \$100,000-125,000), and market these homes as part of an overall community effort to attract and retain employees of area businesses.

Actions

1. Establish a subcommittee of the LDFA that will work with area realtors and builders to identify housing needs within particular price ranges and in particular areas.

Agents: Subcommittee of LDFA, area realtors and builders.

2. Provide information on planned or available housing to any efforts to attract industries and employees to the Ionia area.

Agents: LDFA, Ionia Area Chamber of Commerce, Ionia County Economic Alliance, industrial marketing consultant.

3. Develop with the City a means financing options for builders and developers who wish to pursue marketing of homes within the price ranges described above.

Agents: City Manager, local and regional financing institutions, local builders and developers.

GOAL 6: Work with Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) officials to address truck traffic concerns along the M-66 and M-21 corridors.

Actions

1. Meet with MDOT officials to review re-design options for the M-66/M-21 intersections.

Agents: MDOT, City Council, Public Safety officials, those businesses along the corridors that will be affected by the design change.

2. Meet with MDOT officials to discuss other options such as signs or flashing lights for reducing traffic conflicts along the M-66 and M-21 corridors, particularly where Beardsley Road intersects M-21 and where Apple Tree Drive intersects M-66.

Agents: MDOT, local industry, public safety officials.

GOAL 7: Develop a career package for high school students that promotes jobs in the skilled trades, with a particular emphasis on jobs available in the Ionia area. Make this package available early in the high school experience, rather than just at the end of the high school years.

Actions

1. Obtain descriptions for specific skills required by industries existing in the Ionia area, and descriptions of jobs that require those skills including estimated pay rates and benefits.

Agents: Local industry, The Heartlands Institute of Technology, educators, school administrators and counselors.

2. Produce brochures designed to inform and encourage students to consider a career in the skilled trades and particularly a career with industries located within and near the City of Ionia.

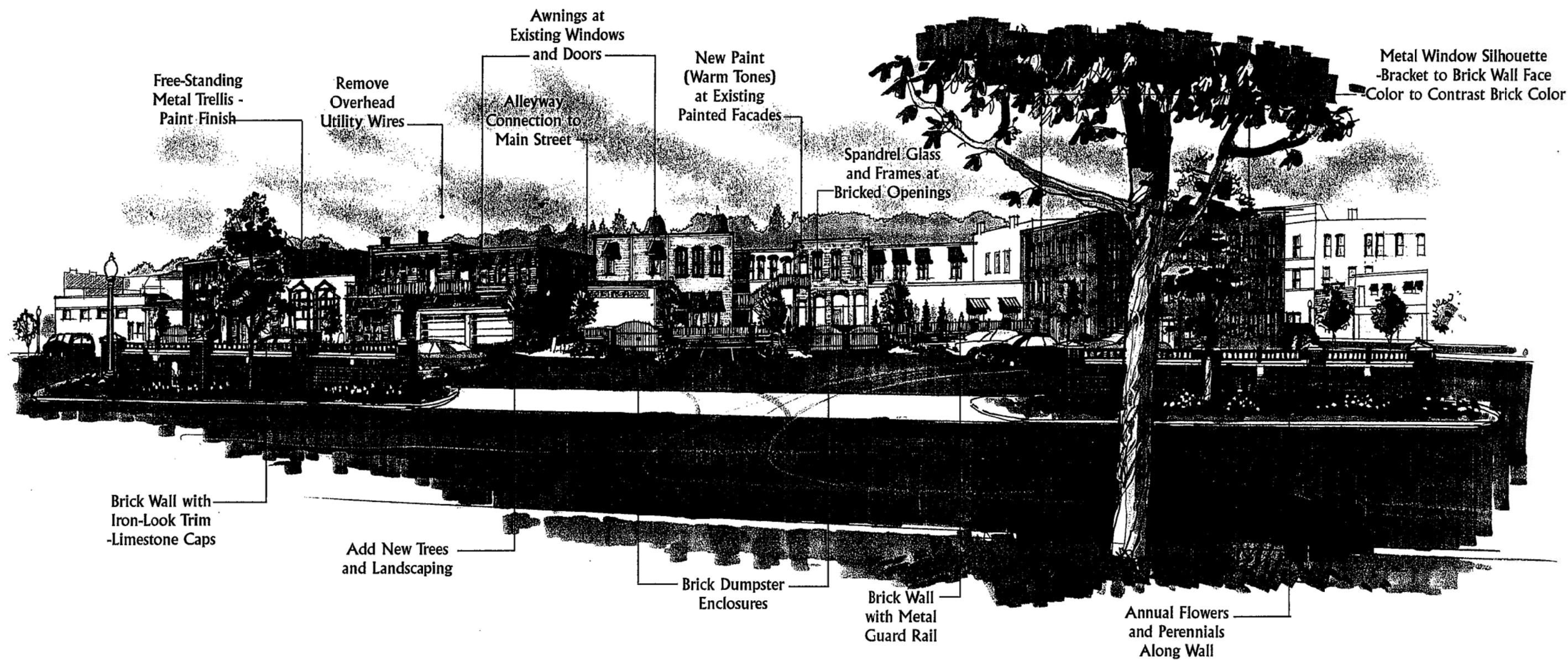
Agents: Ionia and other area school districts in conjunction with local industry.

3. Provide information to high school students in the Ionia area beginning early in the high school experience via school counseling offices, technical education instructors, and during career days.

Agents: High School counselors, instructors in the skilled trades, presenters from local industry.

4. Establish a mentoring, internship, or work-study program whereby high school students of all ages are paired with local industry to observe or participate actively in one or more skilled trade occupations.

Agents: Local industry, school instructors administrators.



Rear Facade Perspective
City of Ionia, Michigan

Brick Piers with
Ornamental Fence

Striped Parking Areas

KFC

Parking Area
Buffer Plantings

Curbed Parking
Area Entrances

Restaurant

Move Overhead
Utilities Underground

Street Tree Planting

Bowling Alley

Street Lighting

Concrete Walk with
Brick Paving

Shell Station

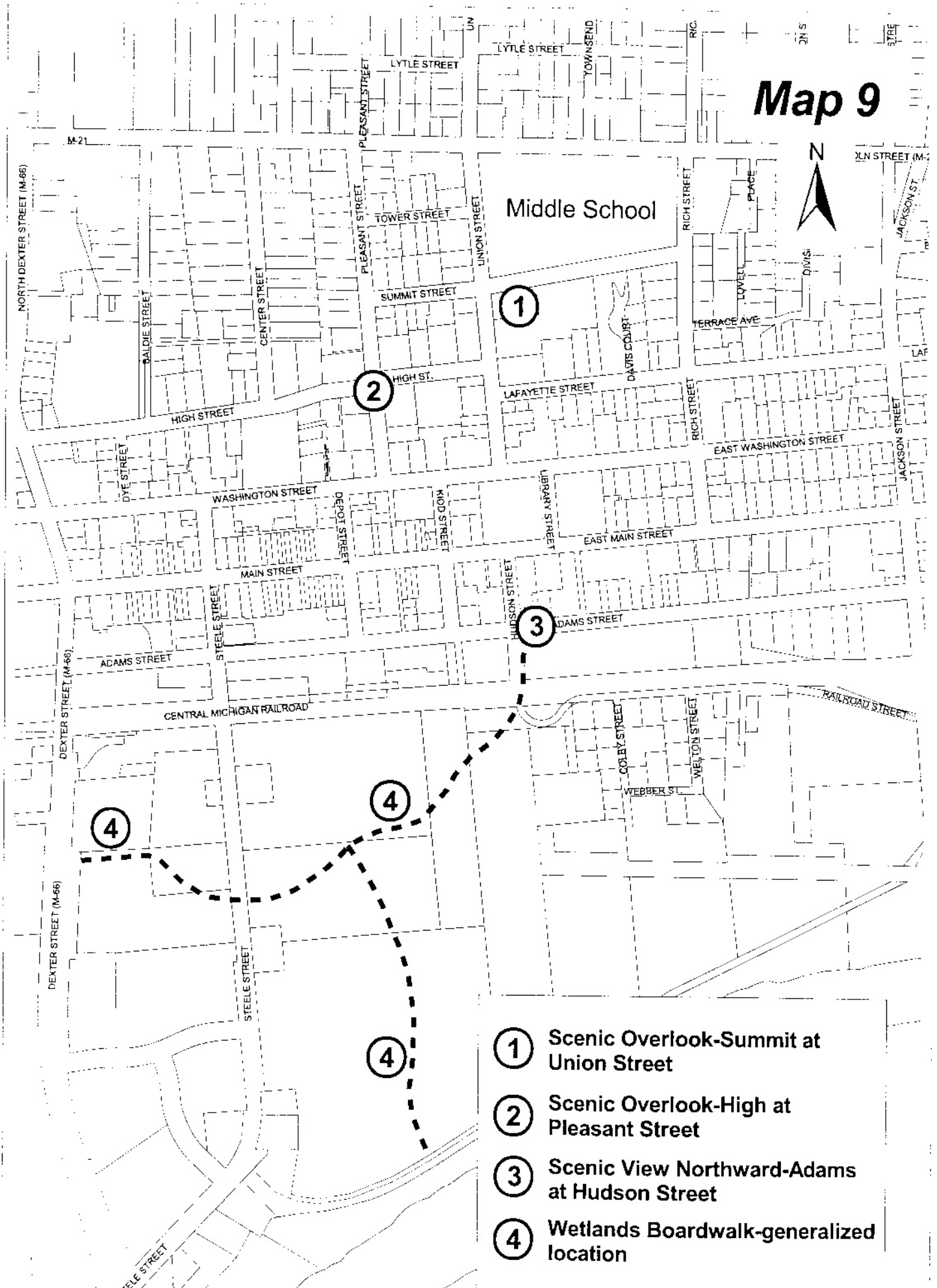
Grass Parkway



City of Ionia, Michigan
Dexter Corridor - Concept Drawing



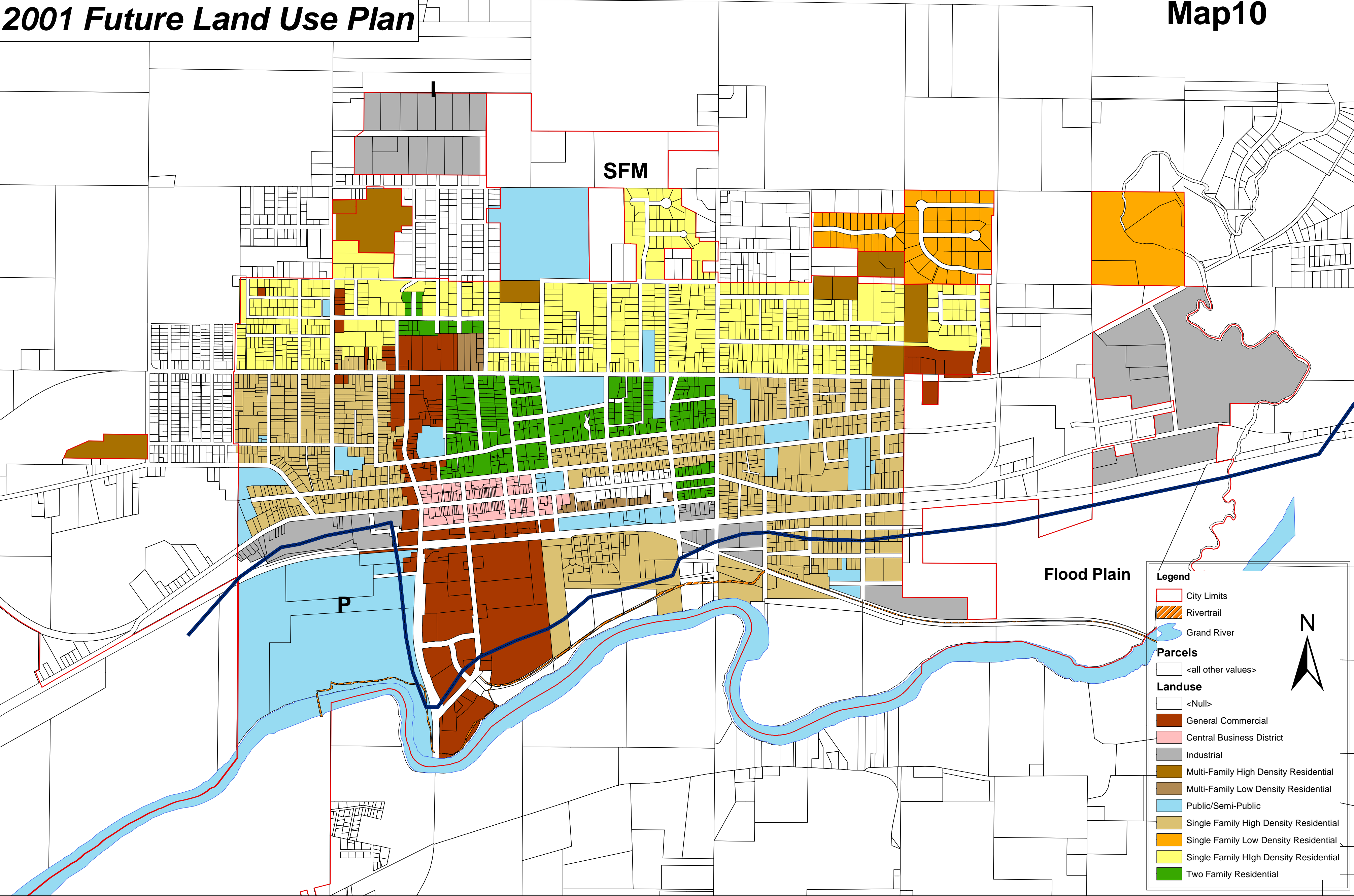
Map 9



- ① Scenic Overlook-Summit at Union Street
- ② Scenic Overlook-High at Pleasant Street
- ③ Scenic View Northward-Adams at Hudson Street
- ④ Wetlands Boardwalk-generalized location

CITY OF IONIA
2001 Future Land Use Plan

Map10



**Adopted by City of Ionia Planning
Commission on April 30, 2001.**

CITY OF IONIA



Map 11



LAND USE CATEGORIES

- R Single Family Residential
- MF Multi Family Residential
- C Commercial
- I Industrial
- O Office
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- P Public/Semi-Public
- PNC Planned Neighborhood Commercial

Ionia City Limits

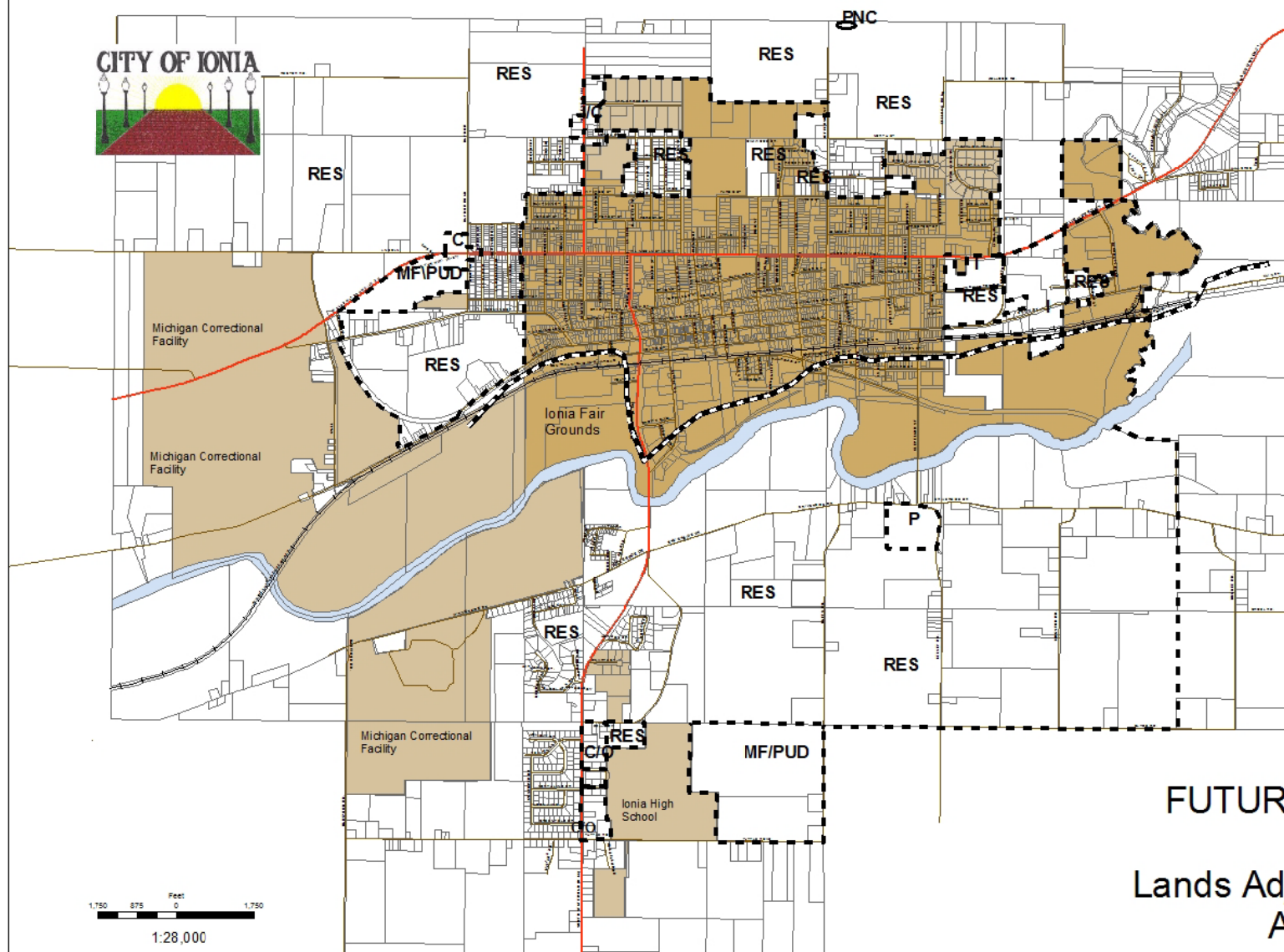
- Streets & Roads
- State Hwy
- RAILROAD
- Grand River

CORPLIMIT

- CITY 425 AREA A
- CITY OF IONIA LIMIT
- 10 YEAR FLOOD PLAIN

**FUTURE LAND USE MAP
for
Lands Adjacent to City of Ionia
April 30, 2001**

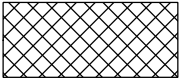
1,750 875 Feet
0 1,750
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Soils City of Ionia



SOIL TYPE



CARLISLE
COHOCTAH
SLOAN



MIAMI
CELINA
MARLETTE



MANCELONA
FOX
BOYER

